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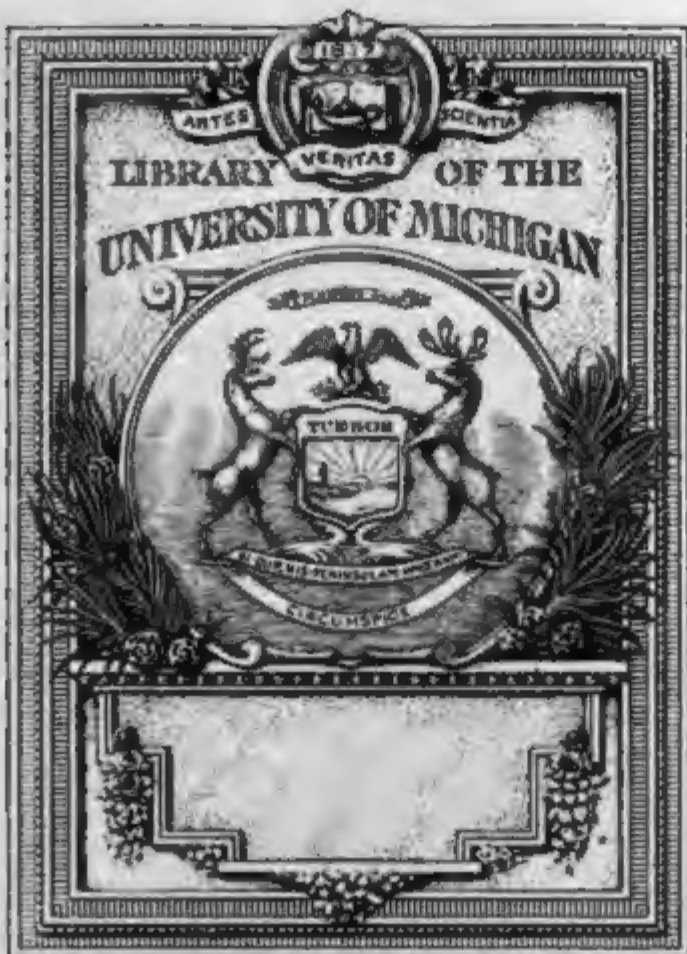
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THE JILT  
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AND OTHER STORIES

BY  
CHARLES READE

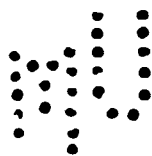


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# *THE JILT: A YARN.*

## PART I.

It was a summer afternoon ; the sun shone mellow upon the south sands of Tenby ; the clear blue water sparkled to the horison, and each ripple, as it came ashore, broke into diamonds. This amber sand, broad, bold, and smooth as the turf at Lord's—and, indeed, wickets are often pitched on it—has been called 'Nature's finest promenade ;' yet, owing to a counter attraction, it was now paraded by a single figure—a tall, straight, well-built young man, rather ruddy, but tanned and bronzed by weather ; shaved smooth as an egg, and his collar, his tie, and all his dress very neat and precise. He held a deck glass, and turned every ten yards, though he had a mile to promenade. These signs denoted a good seaman. Yet his glass swept the land more than the water, and that is not like a sailor.

This incongruity, however, was soon explained and justified.

There hove in sight a craft as attractive to every true tar, from an admiral of the red to the boatswain's mate, as any cutter, schooner, brig, bark, or ship, and bore down on him with colours flying alow and aloft.

Lieutenant Greaves made all sail toward her, for it was Ellen Ap Rice, the loveliest girl in Wales.

He met her with glowing cheeks and sparkling eyes, and thanked her warmly for coming. 'Indeed you may,' said she: 'when I promised, I forgot the flower show.'

'Dear me,' said he, 'what a pity! I would not have asked you.'

'Oh,' said she, 'never mind; I shall not break my heart; but it seems so odd you wanting me to come out here, when you are always welcome at our house, and papa so fond of you.'

Lieutenant Greaves endeavoured to explain. 'Why, you see, Miss Ap Rice, I'm expecting my sailing orders down, and before I go, I want—— And the sight of the sea gives one courage.'

'It gave me a fit of *terror* the last time I was on it.'

'Ay, but you are not a sailor! it gives *me* courage to say more than I dare in your own house; you so beautiful, so accomplished, so admired, I am afraid you will never consent to throw yourself away upon a seaman.'



Ellen arched her brows. 'What *are* you saying, Mr. Greaves? Why, it is known all over Tenby that I renounce the military, and have vowed to be a sailor's bride.'

By this it seems there were only two learned professions recognised by the young ladies at Tenby.

'Ay, ay,' said Greaves, 'an admiral, or that sort of thing.'

'Well,' said the young lady, '*of course* he would *have* to be an admiral—*eventually*. But they cannot be born admirals.' At this stage of the conversation she preferred not to look Lieutenant Greaves, R.N., in the face; so she wrote pot-hooks and hangers on the sand with her parasol so carefully that you would have sworn they must be words of deepest import.

'From a lieutenant to an admiral is a long way,' said Greaves, sadly.

'Yes,' said she, archly, 'it is as far as from Tenby to Valparaiso, where my cousin Dick sailed to last year—such a handsome fellow!—and there's Cape Horn to weather. But a good deal depends on courage and perseverance.' In uttering this last remark she turned her eye askant a moment, and a flash shot out of it that lighted the sailor's bonfire in a moment. 'Oh, Miss Ap Rice, do I understand you? Can

I be so fortunate? If courage, perseverance, and devotion can win you, no other man shall ever— You must have seen I love you.'

'It would be odd if I had not,' said Ellen, blushing a little, and smiling slyly. 'Why, all Tenby has seen it. You don't hide it under a bushel.'

The young man turned red. 'Then I deserve a round dozen at the gangway for being so indelicate.'

'No, no,' said the young Welshwoman, generously. 'Why do I prefer sailors? Because they are so frank and open and artless and brave. Why, Mr. Greaves, don't you be stupid; your open admiration is a compliment to any girl; and I am proud of it, of course,' said she, gently.

'God bless you!' cried the young man. 'Now I wish we were at home, that I might go down on my knees to you without making you the town-talk. Sweet, lovely, darling Ellen, will you try and love me?'

'Humph! If I had not a great esteem for you, should I be here?'

'Ay, but I am asking for more,' said Greaves: 'for your affection, and your promise to wait for me till I am more than a lieutenant. I dare not ask for your hand till I am a post-captain at

least. Ellen, sweet Ellen, may I put this on your dear finger?'

'Why, it is a ring. No. What for?'

'Let me put it on, and then I'll tell you.'

'I declare, if he had not got it ready on purpose!' said she, laughing, and was so extremely amused that she quite forgot to resist, and he whipped it on in a trice. It was no sooner on than she pulled a grave face, and demanded an explanation of this singular conduct.

'It means we are engaged,' said he, joyfully, and flung his cap into the air a great height and caught it.

'A trap!' screamed she. 'Take it off this instant!'

'Must I?' said he, sadly.

'Of course you must.' And she crooked her finger instead of straightening it.

'It won't come off,' said he, with more cunning than one would have expected.

'No more it will. Well, I must have my finger amputated the moment I get home. But mind, I am not to be caught by such artifices. You must ask papa.'

'So I will,' cried Greaves, joyfully—then, upon reflection: 'He'll wonder at my impudence.'

'Oh no,' said Ellen demurely; 'you know he

is mayor of the town, and has the drollest applications made to him at times. Ha! ha!’

‘How shall I ever break it to him?’ said Greaves. ‘A lieutenant!’

‘Why, a lieutenant is a gentleman; and are you not related to one of the First Lords of the Admiralty?’

‘Yes. But he won’t put me over the heads of my betters. All that sort of thing is gone by.’

‘You need not say that. Say you are cousin to the First Lord, and then stop. That is the way to talk to a mayor. There—look at me, telling him what to say—as if I cared. Oh dear—here comes that tittling-tattling Mrs. Dodsley, and her whole brood of children and nurses. She shan’t see what I am doing;’ and Miss Ap Rice marched swiftly into Merlin’s Cave, settled her skirts, and sat down on a stone. ‘Oh,’ said she, with no great appearance of agitation, ‘what a goose I must be! This is the last place I ought to have come to; this is where the lovers interchange their vows—the silly things!’

This artless speech—if artless it was—brought the man on his knees to her with such an outburst of honest passion and eloquent love that her cooler nature was moved as it had never been before. She was half frightened, but flattered and touched; she shed a tear or two, and, though she drew away

the hand he was mumbling, and said he oughtn't and he mustn't, there was nothing very discouraging in her way, not even when she stopped her ears and said, 'You should say all this to papa.' As if one could make as hot love to the mayor in his study as to the mayor's daughter in Merlin's Cave!

She was coy, and would not stay long in Merlin's Cave after this, but said nothing about going home ; so they emerged from the cave, and strolled toward Giltar Point.

Suddenly there issued from the Sound, and burst upon their sight, a beautiful yacht, one hundred and fifty tons or so, cutter-rigged, bowling along before the wind thirteen knots an hour ; sails white as snow and well set, hull low and shapely, wire rigging so slim it seemed of whipcord or mermaid's hair.

'Oh, Arthur!' cried Ellen. 'What a beauty!'

'And so she is,' said he, heartily. 'Bless you for calling me "Arthur."'

'It slipped out—by mistake. Come to the Castle Hill. I must see her come right in—Arthur.'

Arthur took Ellen's hand, and they hurried to the Castle Hill ; and, as they went, kept turning their heads to watch the yacht's manœuvres ; for a sailor never tires of observing how this or that craft is handled ; and the arrival of a first-class

yacht in those fair but uneventful waters was very exciting to Ellen Ap Rice.

The cutter gave St. Catherine's Rock a wide berth, and ran out well to the Woolhouse Reef, then hauled up and stood on the port tack, heading for her anchorage; but an eddy wind from the North Cliffs caught her, and she broke off; so she stood on toward Monkstone Point; then came about with her berth well under her lee, mistress of the situation, as landsmen say.

Arthur kept explaining her manœuvres and the necessity for them, and, when she came about, said she was well-behaved—had forereached five times her length—and was smartly handled too.

'Oh yes,' said Ellen; 'a most skilful captain, evidently.'

This was too hasty a conclusion for the sober Greaves. 'Wait till we see him in a cyclone, with all his canvas on that one stick, or working off a lee shore in a nor'-wester. But he can handle a cutter in fair weather and fresh-water, that is certain.'

'Fresh-water!' said Ellen. 'How dare you? And don't mock people. I can't get enough fresh-water in Tenby to wash my hands.'

'What, do you want them *whiter* than snow?' said Greaves, gloating on them undisguised.

'Arthur, behave, and lend me the glass.'

‘There, dearest.’

So then she inspected the vessel, and he inspected the white hand that held the glass. It was a binocular; for even seamen nowadays seldom use the short telescope of other days; what might be called a very powerful opera-glass has taken its place.

‘Goodness me!’ screamed Ellen. The construction of which sentence is referred to pedagogues.

‘What is the matter?’

‘The captain is a blackamoor.’

Having satisfied herself of the revolting fact by continued inspection, she handed the glass to Greaves. ‘See if he isn’t,’ said she.

Greaves looked through the glass, and took leave to contradict her. ‘Blackamoor! not he. It is worse. It is a gentleman—that ought to know better—with a beastly black beard right down to his waistband.’

‘Oh, Arthur, how horrid! and in such a pretty ship!’

Greaves smiled indulgently at her calling a cutter a ‘ship;’ but her blunders were beauties, he was so in love with her.

She took the glass again, and looked and talked at the same time. ‘I wonder what has brought him in here?’

‘To look for a barber, I should hope.’

‘Arthur—suppose we were to send out the new hair-dresser to him? Would it not be fun? Oh! oh! oh!’

‘What is it now?’

‘A boat going out to him. Well, I declare—a boatful of dignitaries.’

‘Mercy on us!’

‘Yes; I see papa, and I see the secretary of the Cambrian Club, and another gentleman—a deputation, I do believe. No—how stupid I am! Why, the new arrival must be Mr. Laxton, that wrote and told papa he was coming; he is the son of an old friend, a ship-builder. Papa is sure to ask him to dinner; and *I* ask *you*. Do come. He will be quite a lion.’

‘I am very unfortunate. Can’t possibly come to-day. Got to dine on board the ‘Warrior,’ and meet the prince; name down; no getting off.’

‘Oh, what a pity! It would have been so nice; you and Captain Laxton together.’

‘Captain Laxton! Who is he?’

‘Why, the gentleman with the beard.’

‘Hang it all, don’t call him a captain.’

‘Not when he has a ship of his own?’

‘So has a collier, and the master of a fishing-lugger. Besides, these swells are only fair-weather skippers; there’s always a sailing-master



aboard their vessels that takes the command if it blows a capful of wind.'

'Indeed! then I despise them. But I am sorry *you* can't come, Arthur.'

'Are you really, love?'

'You know I am.'

'Then that is all I care for. A dandy yachtsman is no lion to me.'

'We ought to go home now,' said Ellen, 'or we shall not have time to dress.'

He had not only to dress, but to drive ten miles; yet he went with her to her very door. He put the time to profit; he got her to promise everything short of marrying him without papa's consent, and, as she was her father's darling, and in reality ruled him, not he her, that obstacle did not seem insurmountable.

That evening the master of the yacht dined at the mayor's, and was the lion of the evening. His face was rather handsome, what one could see of it, and his beard manly. He had travelled and cruised for years, and kept his eyes and ears open; had a great flow of words, quite a turn for narrative, a ready wit, a seductive voice, and an infectious laugh. His only drawback was a restless eye. Even that he put to a good use by being attentive to everybody in turn. He was

evidently charmed with Ellen Ap Rice, but showed it in a well-bred way, and did not alarm her. She was a lovely girl, and accustomed to be openly admired.

Next day Arthur called on her, and she told him everything, and seemed sorry to have had any pleasure he had not a share in. 'He made himself wonderfully agreeable,' said she, 'especially to papa; and oh, if you had seen how his beard wagged when he laughed—ha! ha! And what do you think, the "Cambrians" have lost no time; they have shot him flying—invited him to their Bachelors' Ball. Ah, Arthur, the first time you and I ever danced together was at that ball a year ago. I wonder whether you remember? Well, he asked me for the first round dance.'

'Confound his impudence! What did you say?'

'I said "No;" I was engaged to the Royal Navy.'

'Dear girl. And that shut him up, I hope.'

'Dear me, no. He is too good-humoured to be cross because a strange girl was bespoke before he came; he just laughed, and asked might he follow in its wake.'

'And you said "Yes."'

'No, I did not, now. And you need not look so cross, for there would have been no harm if I

had; but what I did say was not "yes," but "hum," and I would consult my memoranda. Never you mind who I dance with, Mr. Arthur; their name is legion. Wait till you catch me parading the sands with the creatures, and catching cold with them in Merlin's Cave.'

'My own love! Come on the sands now; it is low-water, and a glorious day.'

'You dear goose!' said Ellen. 'What, ask a lady out when it is only one clear day before a ball? Why, I am invisible to every creature but you at this moment, and even you can only stay till she comes.'

'She! Who?'

'Why, the dressmaker, to be sure. Talk of the—dressmaker, and there's her knock.'

'Must I go this moment?'

'Oh no. *Let them open the door to her first.* But of course it is no use your staying while she is here. We shall be hours and hours making up our minds. Besides, we shall be upstairs, trying on things. Arthur, don't look so. Why, the ball will be here with awful rapidity; and I'll dance with you three times out of four; I'll dance you down on the floor, my sailor bold. I never knew a Welsh girl yet couldn't dance an Englishman into a cocked hat: now that's *vulgar*.'

'Not as you speak it, love. Whatever comes

from your lips is poetry. I wish you could dance me into a cocked hat and two epaulets ; for it is not in nature nor reason you should ever marry a lieutenant.'

'It will be his fault if I don't, then.'

The door was rattled discreetly, and then opened, by old Dewar, butler, footman, and chatterbox of the establishment. 'The dress-maker, Miss.'

'Well, let Agnes take her upstairs.'

'Yes, Miss.'

Greaves thought it was mere selfishness to stay any longer now ; so he bade her good-bye.

But she would not let him go away sad. She tried to console him. 'Surely,' said she, 'you would wish me to look well in public. It is *the* ball of Tenby. I want you to be proud of your prize, and not find you have captured a dowdy.'

The woman of society and her reasons failed to comfort Lieutenant Greaves ; so then, as she was not a girl to accept defeat, she tried the woman of nature : she came nearer him, and said earnestly, 'Only one day, Arthur ! Spare me the pain of seeing you look unhappy.' In saying this, very tenderly, she laid her hand softly on his arm and turned her lovely face and two beautiful eyes full up to him.

A sweet inarticulate sound ensued, and he *did* spare her the pain of seeing him look unhappy, for he went off flushed and with very sparkling eyes.

Surely female logic has been underrated up to date of this writing.

Greaves went away the happiest lieutenant in the Royal Navy, and content to kill time till the ball day. He dined at the club; smoked a cigar on the Castle Hill, and entered his lodgings just as the London day mail was delivered. There was a paper parallelogram for him, with a seal as big as the face of a chronometer. Order from the Admiralty to join the 'Redoubtable' at Portsmouth—for disposal. Private note, by the secretary, advising him to lose no time, as he might be appointed flag-lieutenant to the 'Centaur,' admiral's ship on the China station, from which quick promotion was sure to follow in the ordinary course of the service.

Before he knew Ellen Ap Rice his heart would have bounded with exultation at this bright prospect: but now that heart seemed cut in two; one half glowed with ambition, the other sickened at the very thought of leaving Ellen half won. But those who serve the nation may doubt and fear, but have parted with the right to vacillate. 'There was but one thing to do—start

for London by the fast train next morning at 10 a.m.

He sent a hurried note to Ellen by messenger, telling her what had occurred, and imploring an interview. His messenger brought him back a prompt reply. Papa was going to Cardiff in the morning on business ; would breakfast at half-past eight precisely. He must invite himself to breakfast that night, and come at eight.

He did so, and Ellen came down directly, with the tear in her eye. They comforted each other, agreed to look on it as a sure step to a creditable union, and, meantime, lessen the separation by a quick fire of letters. He would write from every port he landed in, and would have a letter for every homeward-bound ship they brought to out at sea, and she would greet him with a letter at every port.

When they had duly sealed this compact the mayor came in, and that kept them both within bounds.

But Greaves's prospect of promotion was discussed, and the mayor showed a paternal interest, and said, ' Come back to Tenby a captain, and we shall all be proud of you, shall we not, Nelly ? '

When a father says so much as that to a young fellow who has been openly courting his daughter, it hardly bears two meanings ; and Greaves went

away, brave and buoyant, and the sting taken out of the inopportune parting.

He was soon at Portsmouth, and aboard the 'Redoubtable.'

He was appointed flag-lieutenant on board the 'Centaur,' then lying at Spithead, bound on a two years' voyage. Under peculiar circumstances she was to touch at Lisbon, Madeira, and the Cape; but her destination was Hong-Kong, where she was to lie for some time in command of the station.

Next morning a letter from Ellen: he kissed it devotedly before he opened it. After some kind things that were balm to him she seemed to gravitate toward that great event in a girl's life, the ball: 'I did so miss you, dear! and that impudent Mr. Laxton had the first dance—for of course I never thought of putting anybody in your place—but he would not give up the second any more for that. He said I had promised. Oh, and he asked me if I would honour his yacht with my presence, and he would take me a cruise round Sunday Island. I said, "No; I was a bad sailor." "Oh," said he, "we will wait for a soldier's wind." What is a "soldier's wind?" When I would not consent, he got papa by himself, and papa consented directly for both of us. I cannot bear such impudent men, that will not take a "no."'

Arthur wrote back very affectionately, but made a point of her not sailing in Laxton's yacht. It was not proper, nor prudent. The wind might fall; the yacht be out all night; and, in any case, the man was a stranger, of whom they knew nothing, but that his appearance was wild and disreputable, and that he was a mere cruiser and a man of pleasure. He hoped his Ellen would make this little sacrifice to his feelings. This was his one remonstrance.

Ellen replied to it: 'You dear, jealous goose, did you think I would go on board his yacht—the only lady? Of course there was a large party; and you should have seen the Miss Frumps, and that Agnes Barker, how they flung themselves at his head; it was disgusting! But don't you worry about the man, dear. I am sorry I told you. We were back to dinner.'

Then the fair writer went off to other things; but there was a postscript:

'Captain Laxton has called to bid good-bye, and his beautiful yacht is just sailing out of the roads.'

As what little interest there is in this part of the story centres in Miss Ap Rice's letters, I will just say that Greaves had one from her at Lisbon which gave him unmixed pleasure. It was long and kind, though not so gay as usual. As for this Laxton, he appeared to have faded out entirely, for she never mentioned his name.



At Madeira Greaves received a letter shorter and more sprightly. In a postscript she said: 'Who do you think has fallen down from the clouds? That Mr. Laxton, without his yacht. We asked him what had become of her. "Condemned," said he, solemnly. "In the Levant a Greek brig outsailed her; in the Channel here a French lugger lay nearer the wind. After that, no more cutters for me." We think he is a little cracked. That odious Agnes Barker will not let him alone. I never saw such a shameless flirt!'

The ship lay eight days at Madeira, and on the seventh day he received another letter, begging him to come home as soon as possible, for she was subject to downright persecution from Captain Laxton, and her father was much too easy. For the first time in her life she really felt the need of a protector.

This letter set Greaves almost wild. She wanted him back to protect her now, and he bound for the East, and could not hope to see her for two years.

Nothing for it but to pace the deck and rage internally. No fresh advices possible before the Cape. He couldn't sleep, and this operated curiously: he passed for a supernaturally vigilant lieutenant.

There was a commander on board, a sprig of

nobility, a charming fellow, but rather an easy-going officer ; he used to wonder at Greaves, and, having the admiral's ear, praised him for a model. 'The beggar never sleeps at all,' said he. 'I think he will kill himself.'

'He will be the only one of ye,' growled the admiral. But he took notice of Greaves—all the more that a Lord of the Admiralty, who was his personal friend, had said a word for him in one of those meek postscripts which mean so much when written by the hand of power.

At last they reached the Cape, and dropped anchor.

The mail-boat came out with letters.

There was none for Greaves.

No letter at all ! The deck seemed to rise under him, and he had to hold on by the fore-braces ; and even that was as much as he could do, being somewhat weakened by sleepless nights. Several officers came round him, and the ship's surgeon applied salts and brandy, and he recovered, but looked very wild. Then the surgeon advised him to go ashore for a change. Leave was granted immediately, and the second lieutenant went with him good-naturedly enough. They made inquiries, and found another mail was due in two days. They took up their quarters at a hotel, and there Greaves was so wretched, and

his companion so sympathetic, that at last the tormented lover made a confidant of him.

‘Oh, it will be all right,’ said the other. ‘Why should she want you home if she liked that lubber?’

‘I don’t know,’ said poor Greaves. ‘The last letter was not like her—such a high-spirited girl; and it looked as if he was getting her into his power. If he has, all the worse for both of us, for the day I catch him I shall kill him!’

Next day the mail came in, and as Greaves had left his address at the post-office, a letter was brought him, all wetted and swollen with rain, the boy having carried it without the least attempt to protect it from a thick drizzle that enveloped the town that day.

Greaves tore it open. It was fatally short. This is every syllable of it:

‘Forget one unworthy of you. I can resist no longer. I am fascinated. I am his slave, and must follow him round the world. Perhaps he will revenge you.

‘Dear Arthur, I did not mean to deceive. I am but young; I thought I loved you as you deserve. Pray, pray forgive me!

‘E.’

Suspense, the worst of all our tortures, was over; the blow had fallen. Arthur Greaves was a man again.

‘Yes, I forgive you, my poor girl,’ he groaned. ‘But’ (with sudden fury) ‘I’ll kill *him*!’

He told his friend it was all over, and even gave him the letter. ‘It is not her fault,’ he sobbed. ‘The fellow has cast a spell over her. No more about it, or I should soon go mad.’

And from that hour he endured in silence, and checked all return to the subject very sternly.

But his friend talked, and told the other officers how Greaves had been jilted, and was breaking his heart; and he looked so ghastly pale that altogether he met with much honest sympathy. The very admiral was sorry, in his way. He had met him in the street, looking like a ghost, and his uniform hanging loose on him, his stalwart form was so shrunk. ‘Confound the women!’ growled the old boy to his favourite, the commander. ‘There’s the best officer in the ship, a first-class mathematician, an able navigator, a good seaman, and a practical gunner, laid low by some young baggage—not worth his little finger, I’ll be bound.’

Next day he sent for the young man.

‘Lettenant Greaves!’

‘Sir.’

‘Here’s a transport going home, and nobody to command her. They have come to me. I thought of sending the second lettenant; it would

have been more convenient, for, by Jove! sir, when you are gone, I may have to sail the ship myself. However, I have altered my mind; you will take the troops to Plymouth.'

'Yes, Admiral.'

'Then you'd better take a fortnight ashore for your health. You are very ill, sir.'

'Thank you, Admiral.'

'Come out to Hong-Kong how you can. You can apply to the Admiralty for your expenses, *if you think it is any use.*'

Greaves's eye flashed and his pale cheek coloured.

'Ay, ay,' said the Admiral, 'I see these instructions are not so disagreeable as they ought to be. A steam tug and a cargo of lobsters! But you must listen to me: an honest sailor like you is no match for these girls; it is not worth your while to be sick or sorry for any one of them. There, there! send your traps aboard the tub, and clear the harbour of her as soon as you can. She is under your orders, sir.'

'God bless you, Admiral!' sobbed Greaves, and retired all in a hurry, partly to hide his emotions, and partly because it is not usual, in the service, to bless one's superiors to their faces; it is more the etiquette to curse them behind their backs.

Now was Greaves a new man. Light shone in his eye; vigour returned to his limbs. This most unexpected stroke of good-fortune put another face on things. He had the steamboat coaled and victualled with unheard-of expedition, got the troops on board, and steamed away for Plymouth.

They had fair weather, and his hopes rose. After all, Ellen could hardly have taken any irretrievable step. She had never denied his claim on her. A good licking bestowed on Laxton might break the spell, and cool his ardour into the bargain. He felt sure he could win her back somehow. He had been out of sight when this fellow succeeded in deluding her; but now he should get fair play.

He landed the troops at Plymouth and made his report; then off to Tenby at once. He went straight to the mayor's house. A girl opened the door.

‘Miss Ap Rice?’

‘She don't live here sir, now. Lawk! it is Captain Greaves. Come in, sir, and I'll send Mr. Dewar.’

Greaves went in, full of misgivings, and sat down in the dining-room.

Presently Dewar came—a white-haired old fellow, who had been at sea in early life, but was

now the mayor's factotum, and allowed himself great liberties. He came in open-mouthed. 'Ah, Captain Greaves, it is a bad business. I'm a'most sorry to see you here. Gone, sir, gone! and we shall never see her again I'm afraid.'

'Gone! What, run away—with that scoundrel?'

'Well, sir, it did look like running away, being so sudden. But it was a magnificent wedding, for that matter, and they left in a special steamer, with a gilt starn and the flags of all nations a-flying.'

'Married!'

'You may well be surprised, sir. But, for as sudden as it was, I seen it a-coming. You see, sir, he was always at her—morning, noon, and night. He'd have tired out a saint—leastways, a female one. Carriage and four to take her to some blessed old ruin or other. *She* didn't care for the ruin, but she couldn't withstand the four horses, which they are seldom seen in Tenby. Flowers every day, Hindia shawls, diamond necklace, a wheedling tongue, and a beard like a Christmas fir. I blame that there beard for it. Ye see, captain, these young ladies never speaks their real minds about them beards. Lying comes natural to them; and so, to flatter a clean respectable body like you or me, they makes pretend, and calls beards ojious. And so they are. That there Laxton, his beard

supped my soup for a wager agin his belly ; and with him chattering so, he'd forget to wipe it for ever so long. Sarved him right if I'd brought him a basin and a towel before all the company. But these young ladies they don't vally that ; what they looks for in a man is to be the hopposite of a woman. They hates and despises their own sect ; so what they loves in a man is hunblushing him-pudence and a long beard. The more they complains of a man's brass the more they likes it ; and as for a beard, they'd have him look like a beast, so as he looked very onlike a woman, which a beard it is. But if they once fingers one of them beards it is all up with 'em ; and that is how I knew what was coming ; for one day I was at my pantry window a-cleaning my silver, when Miss and him was in the little garden—seated on one bench they was, and not fur off one another neither. He was a-reading poetry to her, and his head so near her that I'm blest if his tarnation beard wasn't almost in her lap. Her eyes was turned up to heaven in a kind of trance, a-tasting of the poetry ; but whiles she was a-looking up to heaven for the meaning of that there sing-song, blest if her little white fingers wasn't twisting the ends of that there beard into little ringlets, without seeming to know what they was doing. Soon as I saw that I said, " Here's a go ! It is all up with



Captain Greaves. He have limed her, this here cockney sailor." For if ever a woman plays with a man's curls, or his whiskers, or his beard, she is netted like a partridge; it is a sure sign. So should we be if the women's hair was loose; but they has so much mercy as to tie it up and make it as hugly as they can and full o' pins, and that saves many a man from being netted and caged and all. So soon arter that she named the day.'

Greaves sat dead silent under this flow of envenomed twaddle, like a Spartan under the knife. But at last he could bear it no longer. He groaned aloud, and buried his contorted face in his hands.

'Confound my chattering tongue!' said honest Dewar, and ran to the sideboard and forced a glass of brandy on him. He thanked him and drank it, and told him not to mind him, but to tell him where she was settled with the fellow.

'Settled, sir?' said Dewar. 'No such luck. She writes to her papa every week, but it is always from some fresh place. "Dewar," says his worship to me, "I've married my girl to the Wandering Jew." Oh, he don't hide his mind from me. He tells me that this Laxton have had a ship built in the north—a thundering big ship, for he's as rich as Croeses—and he have launched her to sail round the world. My fear is he will sail her to the bottom of the ocean.'

‘Poor Ellen!’

‘Captain, captain, don’t fret your heart out for her; she is all right. She loves the man, and she loves hexcitement; which he will give it her. She’d have had a ball here every week if she could; and now she will see a new port every week. She is all right. Let her go her own road. She broke her troth to do it; and we don’t think much, in Wales, of girls as do that, be they gentle or be they simple, look you.’

Greaves looked up and said, sternly, ‘Not one word against her before me. I have borne all I can.’

Old Dewar wasn’t a bit offended. ‘Ah, you are a man, you are,’ said he. Then, in a cordial way, ‘Captain Greaves, sir, you will stay with us, now you are come.’

‘Me stay here?’

‘Ay; why not? Ye mustn’t bear spite against the old man. He stood out for you longer than I ever knowed him to stand out against *her*. But she could always talk him over; she could talk anybody over. It is all haccident my standing so true to you. It wasn’t worth her while to talk old Dewar over; that is the reason. Do ye stay, now. You’ll be like a son to the old man, look you. He is sadly changed since she went—quite melancholy, and keeps a-blaming of hisself for letting her be master.’

‘Dewar,’ said the young man, ‘I cannot. The sight of the places where I walked with her, and loved her, and she seemed to love me—oh, no!—to London by the first train, and then to sea. Thank God for the sea! The sea cannot change into lying land. My heart has been broken ashore. Perhaps it may recover in a few years at sea. Give him my love, Dewar, and God bless *you!*’

He almost ran out of the house, and fixed his eyes on the ground, to see no more objects embittered by recollections of happiness fled. He made his way to his uncle in London, reported himself to the Admiralty, and asked for a berth in the first ship bound to China. He was told, in reply, he could go out in any merchant-ship; but as his pay would not be interrupted, the Government could not be chargeable for his expenses.

In spite of a dizzy headache, he went into the city next day to arrange for his voyage.

But at night he was taken with violent shivering, and before morning was light-headed.

A doctor was sent for in the morning.

Next day the case was so serious that a second was called in.

The case declared itself—gastric-fever and jaundice.

They administered medicines, which, as usual

in these cases, did the stomach a little harm, and the system no good.

His uncle sent for a third physician; a rough but very able man. He approved all the others had done—and did the very reverse; ordered him a milk diet, tepid aspersions, frequent change of bed and linen, and no medicine at all, but a little bark, and old Scotch whisky in moderation.

‘Tell me the truth,’ said his sorrowful uncle.

‘I always do,’ said the doctor; ‘that is why they call me a brute. Well, sir, the case is not hopeless *yet*. But I will not deceive you; I fear he is going a longer voyage than China.’

So may the mind destroy the body, and the Samson who can conquer a host be laid low by a woman.

## PART II.

YOUTH, a good constitution, good nursing, the right food and drink, and no medicine, saved the life of Arthur Greaves. But gastric-fever and jaundice are terrible foes to attack a man in concert; they left him as unlike the tanned and ruddy seaman of our first scene as the wrecked ship, battered against the shore, is to the same vessel when she breasted the waves under canvas.

His hair was but half an inch long, his grizzly beard two inches; and his sunken cheeks as yellow as saffron. They told him he was out of danger, and offered him a barber to shave his chin—the same that had shaved his head a fortnight before.

‘No,’ said the convalescent; ‘not such a fool.’

He explained to his uncle in private: ‘I have lost my Ellen for want of a beard. I won’t lose another that way, if I ever have one.’

He turned his now benumbed heart toward his profession, and pined for blue water. His physician approved; and so, though still weakish and yellowish, he shipped as passenger in the ‘Phœbe,’ bound for Bombay and China, and went on board at Gravesend. She was registered nine hundred tons, and carried out a mixed cargo of hardware and Manchester goods, including flaming cottons got up only for the East, where Englishmen admire them for their Oriental colour. She was well manned at starting, and ably commanded from first to last by Captain Curtis and six officers. The first mate, Mr. Lewis, was a very experienced seaman, and quite a friendship sprung up between him and Flag-lieutenant Greaves. The second mate, Castor, was an amiable daredevil, but had much to learn in navigation, though

in mere seamanship he was well enough. Fortunately he knew his deficiencies, and was teachable.

A prosperous voyage is an uneventful one; and there never was a more humdrum voyage than the 'Phœbe's' from Gravesend to Bombay. She was towed from Gravesend to Deal, where an easterly wind sprung up, and, increasing, carried her past the 'Lizard,' and out of sight of land; soon after that the wind veered a point or two to the northward. She sighted Madeira on the seventh day, and got the N.E. Trades; they carried her two degrees north of the line. Between that and 2 S. she fell into the Doldrums. But she got the S.E. Trades sooner than usual, and made the best of it; set the foretopmast studding-sail, and went a little out of her course. At 34 S. she got into the steady nor'-wester, and, in due course, anchored in Table Bay.

The diamond fever being at its height, several hands deserted her at the Cape. But she had fair weather, and reached Bombay without any incident worth recording. By this time Greaves had put on flesh and colour, and though his heart had a scar that often smarted, it bled no longer; and as to his appearance, he was himself again, all but a long and very handsome beard.

At Bombay the 'Phœbe' landed part of her cargo, and all her passengers, but took a few fresh

ones on board for China—a Portuguese merchant bound for Macao, and four ladies, two of them officers' wives returning to their husbands, and two spinsters going out to join their relatives at Hong-Kong. They were all more or less pretty and intelligent, and brightened the ship amazingly; yet one day every man in her wished, with all his soul, every one of those ladies was out of her. She also shipped forty Lascars, to make up for twenty white men she had lost by death and desertion.

The 'Phœbe' had fair weather to Penang, and for some time after, but not enough of it. However, after the usual bother in the Straits of Malacca, she got clear, and carried a light breeze with her. Captain Curtis feared it would be down sun, down wind; but the breeze held through the first and greater part of the second watch; and then, sure enough, it fell dead calm.

Mr. Lewis had the morning watch; the ropes were coiled up at one bell, the whip rigged, the deck wetted and sanded, and they were holystoning it when day began to break. Then there loomed the black outline of a strange sail lying on the 'Phœbe's' port beam, a quarter of a mile off. The sun soon gets his full power in that latitude, and in a minute the vessel burst out quite clear, a top-sail schooner of some four hundred tons, with

a long snaky hull, taunt, raking masts, and black mast-heads, everything very trig alow and aloft, sails extremely white ; she carried five guns of large calibre on each side.

Lewis reported her to the captain directly, and he came on deck. They both examined her with their glasses. She puzzled them.

‘What do you make of her, Lewis? Looks like a Yankee.’

‘So I thought, sir, till I saw her armament.’

Here Greaves joined them, and the captain turned toward him. ‘Can she be one of your China squadron?’

‘Hardly, unless the admiral has a schooner for his tender ; and, if so, she would be under a pennant.’

Lewis suggested she might be a Portuguese schooner looking out for pirates.

Captain Curtis said she might, and he should like to know ; so he ordered the driver to be brailed up, and the ship’s colours hoisted.

The next moment it was eight bells, and pipe to breakfast. But Captain Curtis and his companions remained on deck to see the stranger hoist her colours in reply.

The schooner did not show a rag of bunting. She sat the water, black, grim, snakelike, silent.

Her very crew were invisible ; yet one glance



at her rigging had showed the officers of the 'Phœbe' she was well manned.

Captain Curtis had his breakfast brought him on deck.

The vessels drifted nearer each other, as often happens in a dead calm. So, at 8.50 A.M., Captain Curtis took a trumpet, and hailed the stranger, '*Schooner ahoy!*'

No answer.

The 'Phœbe's' men tumbled up, and clustered on the forecastle, and hung over the bulwarks; for nothing is more exciting to a ship's company than hailing another vessel at sea.

Yet not one of the schooner's crew appeared.

This was strange, unnatural, and even alarming.

The captain, after waiting some time, repeated his hail still louder.

This time a single figure showed on board the schooner—a dark, burly fellow, with a straight moustache, a little tuft on his chin, and wearing a Persian fez. He stood by the foremast swiftsure of the main rigging, and bawled through his trumpet, 'Hullo!'

'What schooner is that?'

'What ship is that?'

'The "Phœbe."'

'Where from, and where bound?'

'Penang to Hong-Kong. Who are *you*?'

‘The “Black Rover.”’

‘Where bound?’

‘Nowhere. Cruising.’

‘Why don’t—ye—show—your colours?’

‘Ha! ha!’

As this strange laugh rung through the trumpet across the strip of water that now parted the two vessels, the Mephistophelian figure dived below, and the schooner was once more deserted, to all appearance.

It was curious to see how Captain Curtis and his first mate now evaded their own suspicions, and were ingenious in favourable surmises. Might she not be an armed slaver? or, as Lewis had suggested, a Portuguese?

‘That fellow who answered the hail had the cut of a Portuguese.’

But here Mr. Castor put in his word. ‘If she is looking for pirates, she hasn’t far to go for one, I’m thinking,’ said that hare-brained young man.

‘Nonsense, sir!’ said the captain. ‘What do you know about pirates? Did ye ever see one as near as this?’

‘No, sir.’

‘No more did I,’ said Greaves.

‘*You!*’ said Castor. ‘Not likely. When they see a Queen’s ship they are all wings and no beak. But they can range up alongside a poor

devil of a merchantman. Not seen a pirate? no; they are rare birds now; but I have seen ships of burden and ships of war, and this is neither. She is low in the water, yet she carries no freight, for she floats like a cork. She is armed and well manned, yet no crew to be seen. The devils are under hatches till the time comes. If she isn't a pirate, what is she? However, I'll soon know.'

'Don't talk so wild, Castor,' said the captain. 'And how can you know? they won't answer straight, and they won't show their colours.'

'Oh, there's a simple way you have not thought of,' said the sapient Castor; 'and I'll take that way, if you will allow me—*I'll board her!*'

At this characteristic proposal, made with perfect composure, the others looked at him with a certain ironical admiration.

'Board her!' said the captain. 'I'll be d—d if you do!'

'Why not, captain? There, that shows you think she is wicked. Why, we *must* find out what she is—somehow.'

'We shall know soon enough,' said the captain, gloomily. 'I am not going to risk my officers; if anybody boards her, it shall be me.'

'Oh, that is the game, is it?' said Castor, reproachfully. 'Why, captain, you are a married man. You ought to be ashamed of yourself.'

‘No more words, sir, if you please!’ said the captain sternly. ‘Step forward and give the order to sling a butt, and get a boat ready for target practice. I shall exercise the guns, being a calm. Perhaps he thinks we are weaker than we are.’

As soon as Castor’s back was turned he altered his tone, and said, with much feeling, ‘I know that foolhardy young man’s mother. How could I look her in the face if I let him board that devil before we know her intentions?’

A butt was ballasted with sand, so as to secure its floating steadily, bung-hole up; the bung was removed, and a boat-hook wedged in, bearing the ensign. The butt was then launched, and towed out half a mile to starboard, and the ‘Phoebe’ tried her guns on it.

If she had anticipated this meeting, the ship could have poured a formidable broadside into the mysterious stranger, for she carried three 32-pound carronades of a side on her quarter-deck, and thirteen 18-pounders of a side on her gun-deck. But it was the old story; the times were peaceable, the men were berthed on the gun-deck, and, for their convenience, eighteen out of the twenty-six guns had been struck down into the hold.

With the remaining guns on the starboard side they fired at the butt, and so carefully that, after an hour’s practice, it was brought back very

little the worse. The only telling shot was made on the gun-deck by a gunner, whose foot slipped somehow, and he dropped a 32-pound ball on Greaves's ankle, disabling that unfortunate officer: he was carried to his cabin in great pain, and there attended by the surgeon.

The commotion caused by this misfortune was hardly over upon the quarter-deck when an unexpected incident occurred—an act of direct insubordination. Mr. Castor had put on his uniform, and persuaded two poor fellows, an ignorant Lascar and a reckless Briton like himself, to go out to the schooner in the boat. They slipped into her as soon as the party came on board with the butt, and at first pretended to be baling her out and examining her for leaks; but they worked quietly along-side till they got under the ship's bows, and then dropped their oars gently into the water, and pulled for the schooner like mad.

They were a third of the way before Captain Curtis caught sight of them. He roared to them to come back, and threatened to put them in irons. But none are so deaf as those who won't hear; and he did not use his trumpet, lest the enemy should think they were disunited on board the ship.

He and Lewis, therefore, now looked on in

silence, and literally perspired with anxiety for the fate of Castor and his boat's crew; and although their immediate anxiety was as unselfish as it was keen, yet they were also conscious that, if Castor lost his life in this rash enterprise, that would prove the commander of the schooner felt strong enough to attack *them*—no quarter on either side—and intended to do it.

At this terrible moment, when their eyes were strained to observe every movement in the schooner, and their nerves strung up like violin strings, female voices broke gaily in upon them with innocent chatter that, for once, jarred as badly as screams. The lady passengers had kept very snug during the firing, but finding it was quite over, burst on the deck in a body.

FIRST LADY. 'Oh, that's the ship we have been saluting.'

SECOND LADY. 'A royal salute.'

THIRD LADY. 'Is it the Duke of Edinburgh's ship, captain?'

No answer.

THIRD LADY. 'What a beauty!'

FIRST LADY. 'Why does she not salute us back, captain?'

CAPTAIN. 'Got no guns, perhaps.'

FIRST LADY. 'Oh yes, she has. Those black things peeping out are guns.'

SECOND LADY. 'Ah, there's one of our boats going to call on her.'

THIRD LADY. 'Oh, captain, may we go on board of her?'

CAPTAIN. 'No, ma'am.'

THIRD LADY. 'Oh dear! Why not?'

CAPTAIN. 'That is my business.'

The fair speaker tossed her head and said, 'Well, I'm sure!' but she drew back with red cheeks, and the tears in her eyes, at being snubbed so suddenly and unreasonably; the other ladies gathered round her, and the words, 'Cross old thing!' were heard to issue from the party, but fell unheeded, for neither the captain nor Mr. Lewis had eyes or ears except for the schooner and the boat. As the latter neared the ship, several faces peeped, for a moment, at the port-holes of the schooner.

Yet, when the boat ran along-side the schooner amid-ships, there was no respect shown to Castor's uniform, nor, indeed, common civility: it would have been no more than the right thing to pipe the side; but there were no sidesmen at all, nor even a side-rope.

Observing this, Captain Curtis shook his head very gravely.

But the dare-devil Castor climbed the schooner's side like a cat, and boarded her in

a moment, then gave his men an order, and disappeared. The men pulled rapidly away from the schooner, and a snarl of contempt and horror broke from Curtis and his first mate. They seemed to be abandoning their imprudent but gallant officer.

They pulled about a hundred yards, and then rested on their oars, and waited.

Then every sailor on board the 'Phœbe' saw instinctively that Castor felt his danger, and had declined to risk any life but his own. He must have ordered the men to lie to a certain time, then give him up for lost, and return in safety to the ship. This trait and his daring made Castor, in one single moment, the darling of the whole ship's company.

The ladies were requested to go below, on some pretence or other, and the ship was cleared for action as far as possible.

Meantime words can hardly describe the racking suspense that was endured by the officers, and, in a great degree, by the crew of the 'Phœbe.' The whole living heart of that wooden structure throbbed for one man.

Five minutes passed—ten—twenty—thirty—yet he did not re-appear.

Apprehension succeeded to doubt, and despair to apprehension.



At last they gave him up, and the burning desire for vengeance mingled with their fears for their own safety. So strong was this feeling that the next event, the pirate's attack upon that ill-fated officer's ship, was no longer regarded with unmixed dread. The thirst for vengeance mingled with it.

At ten o'clock A.M. the strained eyes on board the 'Phœbe' saw two sidesmen appear amidships, and fix scarlet side-ropes.

Then came an officer and hailed Castor's boat. The men pulled to the schooner. Then Castor appeared, and went down by the ropes into the boat; he and the officer touched hats. Castor sat down in the stern-sheets, and the men gave way.

The ship's company cheered, the side was piped, and the insubordinate officer received on board with all the honours. Caps were waved, eyes glistened, and eager hands extended to him; but he himself did not seem so very exultant. He was pleased with his reception, however, and said, in his quaint way, 'This is jolly. I am not to be put in irons, then?'

The captain drew him apart. 'Well, what is she?'

'Don't know.'

'Why, what do you mean? You have been near an hour aboard her.'

‘But I am none the wiser. Captain, I wish you would have us all into your cabin, and then I’ll tell you a rum story; perhaps you will understand it among you, for you know my head-piece isn’t A1.’

This advice was taken directly, and Castor related his adventures, in full conclave, with closed doors.

#### MR. CASTOR’S NARRATIVE.

‘The beggar did not hang out so much as a rope to me. I boarded his hooker the same way I should like to board her again with thirty good cutlasses at my back; and I ordered the boat to lie out of harm’s way for an hour.

‘Well, I soon found myself on her quarter-deck, under the awning. By George! sir, it was alive with men, as busy as bees, making their little preparations, drat ’em. Some were oiling the locks of the guns, some were cleaning small-arms, some were grinding cutlasses. They took no notice of me, and I stood there looking like an ass.

‘I wondered whether they took me for a new officer just joined; but that was not likely. However, I wasn’t going to notice *them*, as they hadn’t the manners to notice me. So there I stood and

watched them. And I had just taken out my vesuvians to light a cigar, when a middle-aged man, in a uniform I don't know, but the metal of it was silver, came bustling up, touched his cap to the deck, and brushed past me as if I was invisible; so I hung on to his coat-tails, and brought him to under all his canvas.'

This set the youngest mate giggling, but he was promptly frowned down.

'“Hullo!” says he, “what are ye about? Why, who the deuce are *you*?”

'“Second mate of the ‘Phœbe,’ along-side,” says I.

'“Mate of the ‘Phœbe,’” says he; “then what brings you on board of *us*?”

'That was rather a staggerer—but I thought a bit, and said I wanted to see the captain of the schooner.

'Well, sir, at this some of the men left off working, and looked up at me as if I was some strange animal.

'“*Do* you?” says the officer; “then you are the only man aboard that does.” Then he turned more friendly like, and says, “Look here, young gentleman, don't you go to meet trouble. Wait till it comes to you. Go back to your ship, before *she* sees you.”

'“*She*! Who?”

‘“No matter. You sheer off, and leave our captain alone.”

‘Now, gentlemen, I’m a good-tempered chap, and you may chaff me till all is blue, but I can’t stand intimidation. If they threaten me, it puts my blood up. At school, if another boy threatened me, I never answered him; my fist used to fly at his mouth as soon as the threat was out of it.’

‘Good little boy,’ said Lewis.

But the captain was impatient. ‘Come, sir, we don’t want your boyish reminiscences: to the point, please.’

‘Ay, ay, sir. Well, then, the moment he threatened me, I just turned my back on him and made for the companion-ladder.

‘“Avast there!” roared the officer, in an awful fright. “Nobody uses that ladder but the captain himself and— Man alive, if you *will* see him, follow me.” So he led me down the main hatchway. By the chain-cable tier I came all of a sudden on three men in irons; ugly beggars they were, and wild-looking, reckless chaps. One of them ran a spare anklet along the bar, and says to me, “Here you are; room for one more.” But my companion soon stopped his jaw. “Silence in irons, or he’ll cut your tongue out,” says he. He wouldn’t go to the captain with me; but he pointed

aft, and whispered, "Last cabin but one, starboard side." Then he sheered off, and I went for'ard and knocked at the cabin door. No answer; so I knocked louder. No answer; so I turned the handle and opened the door.'

'Young madman!' groaned the captain.

'Not so very. *I had my little plan.*'

'Oh, he had his little plan,' said Curtis, ironically, pityingly, paternally. Then, hotly, 'Go on, sir; don't keep us on tenterhooks like this.'

'Well, captain, I opened that door, and oh, my eye! it wasn't a cabin; it was a nobleman's drawing-room: pile carpet an inch thick; beautiful painted ceiling; so many mirrors down to the ground, and opposite each other, they made it look like a big palace; satin-wood tables; luxurious couches and chairs; a polished brass stove, but all the door-handles silver; venetians, and rose-coloured blinds and curtains. The sun just forced its way through, and made everything pink. It was a regular paradise; but, instead of an angel, there was a great hulking chap, squatted cross-legged on an ottoman at the farther end, smoking a hookah as long and twisty as a boa-constrictor. The beggar wasn't smoking honest tobacco neither, but mixed with rose-leaves and cinnamon shavings, and, in my opinion, a little opium, for he turned up his eyes like an owl in paradise.'

‘Not so very formidable, then.’

‘Formidable!—well, I wouldn’t answer for that, at the proper time, and at the head of his cutthroats; for he was a precious big chap, with black brows, and a wicked-looking moustache and tuft. He was the sort of chap that nigger who smothers his wife in the play says he *killed* “a malignant and a turbaned Turk,” you know. But then it wasn’t his fighting hour; he was in smoker’s paradise, and it’s my belief you might have marched up to him and knocked him on the head—like one of those devil-may-care penguins that won’t budge for a cannon ball—and then he would have gone smoking on the ground till you cut his head off and took away his pipe. But you’ll find the “Malignant” had a protector, worse luck, and one that didn’t smoke spice, but only looked it. Well, captain, I came up to the nearest table, and hit it pretty hard with my fist, to see if I could make that thundering picture jump.’

‘What picture?’

‘Why, the “Malignant and the turbaned.” Devil a bit! He took no notice. So then I bawled at the beggar: “Your most obedient, sir; I’m the second mate of the ‘Phœbe,’ lying alongside, and the captain has sent me to compare longitudes.”

‘The “Malignant” took no notice; just glared

at me, and smoked his pipe. He looked just like that "Malignant Turban" that plays whist with you by machinery in London, and fixes his stony eyes on you all the time; but, with me bawling at him, a door opened, and in came a flood of light, and, in the middle of it—oh Lord !'

' Well, what ?'

' Just the loveliest woman I ever clapped eye on. The vision took me all aback, and I suppose I stared at her as hard as the "Malignant" was staring at vacancy; for she smiled at my astonishment, and made me a sort of a haughty curtsy, and waved her hand for me to sit down. Then says she, mighty civil—too civil by half—"Have I the pleasure of addressing the captain of that beautiful ship ?"

' "I'm her second officer, ma'am," says I, but I was too dazzled by her beauty to make her up any lies all in a moment.

' "Bound for China ?" says she, like honey.

' "Yes, ma'am."

' "A large crew ?" says she, like treacle.

' "About ninety, ma'am," says I, very short, for I began to smell a rat.

' "Many European sailors among them ?" says she.

' So then I saw what the beautiful fiend would be at, and I said, "About fifty."

“Indeed!” says she, smiling like Judas. “You know ladies will be curious, and I could only count twenty-five.”

“The rest were below coiling ropes,” says I.

“So she laughed at that, and said, “But I saw plenty of Lascars.”

“Oh, our Lascars are picked men,” says I.

“I wish you joy of them,” she says. “We don’t have them here: not to be trusted in *emergencies*, you know.”

“While I was swallowing this last pill she at me again. Did we often exercise our guns? I said of course we did, in a calm. “Why,” said she, “that is not much use; the art is to be able to hit ships and *things* as you are rising or falling on the waves—so they *tell* me,” says she, correcting herself.

“The beautiful devil made my blood run cold. She knew too much.

“What is your cargo?” says she, just as if she was our bosom friend. But I wouldn’t stand any more of it. “Nutmegs,” says I. So she laughed and said, “Well, but seriously?” So then I thought chaffing her would do no good, and I told her we had landed the valuable part of our cargo at Bombay, and had only a lot of grates and fire-irons left. I put on a friendly tone, all sham—like hers, you know—and told her that tea ships depended on the cargo they brought home;



not on the odds and ends they took out just to ballast the craft.'

'Well, what was the next thing?'

'Oh, I remember she touched a silver bell, and a brown girl, in loose trousers and cocked-up shoes and a turban, came in with a gold tray—or it might be silver-gilt—and a decanter of wine; and the lovely demon said, "Pour out some wine, Zulema."

'“No, thank you, ma'am,” said I. So she laughed and said it wasn't poisoned. She sent off the slave and filled two glasses with the loveliest white hand, and such a diamond on it! She began drinking to me, and of course I did the same to her. “Here's to our next merry meeting,” said she. My blood ran a little cold at that, but I finished my liquor. It was no use flying a white feather; so says I, “Here's to the Corsair's bride.” Her eyes twinkled, but she made me a civil curtsy.

'“That's prime Madeira,” says I.

'She said yes; it had been their companion in several cruises.

'“It runs through a fellow like oil,” says I.

'“Then have some more?” said she.

'So I did, and then she did not say any more, and the “Malignant” sat mum-chance: and I was pumped dry and quite at a loss. So, not to look like a fool, I—asked 'em to breakfast.'

‘What! Who?’

‘Why, the lady and gentleman: I mean the “Malignant” and the “Corsair’s bride.”’

‘Young madman!’

‘Why, what harm could that do, captain?’

‘What good could it do? What did they say?’

‘She said, “Are there any ladies aboard?”’

‘I said, “Yes, and tip-top fashionable ones.”’

‘So then she looked at the “Malignant,” and he never moved a muscle. So then she said, “We will do ourselves the pleasure—if *we are in company*,” and she smiled ever so knowingly, did that beautiful demon.

‘Then I pretended cheerful. “That is all right,” said I. “Mind, I shall tell the ladies, and they will be awfully disappointed if you don’t come.”’

‘“I assure you,” says she, “we will come—if *we are in company*. I give you my hand on it,” says she, and she put out her hand. It was lovely and white, but I looked at it as if ’twas the devil’s claw; but I had to take it or walk the plank; so I did take it, and—oh Lord, would you believe it?—she gave mine such a squeeze!’

LEWIS. ‘Gammon!’

CASTOR. ‘I tell you she gave my flipper the most delicious squeeze you ever—it was so long, and soft, and gentle.’

CURTIS. 'But what was it for?'

CASTOR. 'At the time I thought it was to encourage me; for she said, ever so softly, "You are a brave man." But more likely it was to delude me and put me off my guard. Well, I was for sheering off after that, and I made a low bow to the "Malignant." He never got up, but he showed his little bit o' breeding, took the snake-pipe out of his mouth, and brought his head slowly down, an inch a minute, till he looked like pitch-poling over on to the floor and cutting a somersault; and, while he was going down and up again, the lady said, "You had better wait a minute." It was in a very particular way she said it; and she flew to a telegraph, and her white hands went clicking at an awful rate; and I cannot get it out of my head that if those white hands hadn't worked those wires, I should have been cut in pieces at the cabin door. Not that I cared so very much for that. *I had my little plan.* However, she left off clicking just as that old picture got his figure-head above his bows again; so I made my bow to 'em both, and sheered off; and blest if that elderly officer does not meet me at the door, and march before me to the quarter-deck; and there's another officer hailing my boat; and there were fine scarlet silk side-ropes fixed, and two men standing by them. So I came away

in state. But I'm no wiser than I went. Whether it is an Eastern prince, out on pleasure, or a first-class pirate, I don't know. I hope you will order a tip-top breakfast, captain, for the honour of the ship: lobster-curry, for one thing; and sharpen cutlasses and clean small-arms, and borrow all Mr. Greaves's revolvers; he is taking out quite a cargo of 'em: and that reminds me I forgot to tell you what my little plan was that made me so saucy. I borrowed one of Greaves's six-shooters—here it is—and at the first sign of treachery I wasn't going to waste powder, but just cut back and kill the "Malignant" and the "Corsair's bride;" for I argued they wouldn't have a successor ready, and ten to one they would have a quarrel who was to take the command; so that would save our hooker at the expense of one hand, and him a bachelor. Nobody minds a bachelor getting snuffed out.'

Upon Mr. Castor revealing his little plan, the other officers insisted on shaking hands with him. At which he stared, but consented heartily; and finding himself in such unexpected favour, repeated his advice. 'Prepare an excellent breakfast for to-morrow, and grind cutlasses, and load the guns with grape, and get all the small-arms loaded, especially revolvers; for,' said Castor, 'I *think* they mean to board us to-night, cut all

our throats, ravish the women, and scuttle the craft, when they have rifled her; but if they don't, I'm *sure* they will come to breakfast. She gave me her hand on that, and the turbaned Turk nodded his thundering old piratical figure-head.'

The other officers agreed with him that the ship would probably be attacked that night, and all possible preparations were made for her defence. They barred the ports on the main-deck, charged the cannon with grape, armed the Lascars with cutlasses, and the white men with muskets as well, and the officers and the boatswain with cutlasses and revolvers.

The sun set, and all was now grim expectation and anxiety. No watch was called, for the whole crew was the watch.

The moon came out, and showed the cutter, like a black snake, lying abominably near.

Hour after hour dragged by in chill suspense. Each bell, as it was struck, rung like a solemn knell.

Midnight came and passed. Morning approached.

The best time for attacking seemed to have passed.

Fears began to lessen—hopes to glow.

The elastic Castor began to transfer his whole anxiety to the cook and his mate, standing firm

to his theory that the Corsair and his bride would come to breakfast if they did not attack the ship that night. The captain pooh-poohed this; and indeed Castor persuaded nobody but the cook. Him he so flattered about his fish patties and lobster curries, etc., that he believed anything.

Day broke, and the ship's company and officers breathed freely. Some turned in. But still the schooner was closely watched by many eyes and deck glasses, and keenly suspected.

Soon after eight bells there was a movement on board the schooner, and this was immediately reported by Mr. Castor, then in charge of the ship, to Captain Curtis. He came on deck directly.

'You are right, sir,' said he, handling his glass, 'and they are lowering a boat. He is coming. And, by Jove, they are rigging a whip! There's a lady. Mr. Castor, rig a whip on the main-yard. Bear a hand there, forward. Bosen, attend the side. Here, sling this chair. Smart, now!—they are shoving off.'

Six able oarsmen brought the Corsair and his bride, with race-horse speed, from the schooner to the ship.

But there were smart fellows on board the 'Phœbe' too. There was a shrill wind of the boatswain's pipe-call, the side was promptly manned, the chair lowered into the schooner's boat

as she came along-side, and gently hoisted, with the lady in it, and she was landed on the deck of the 'Phœbe.'

She had a thick veil on.

The commander of the schooner drew up beside her, and Captain Curtis came forward, and the two commanders off hats and bowed.

The captain of the schooner was now gorgeous in a beautiful light-blue uniform, the cloth glossy as velvet and heavy with silver, as was also his cap.

The captain led the way to the cabin. His guests followed. The ladies were duly informed, and dropped in one after another. Then the Corsair's bride removed her veil, and revealed a truly beautiful woman, in the prime of youth, with a divine complexion, and eyes almost purple, so deep was their blue.

Captain Curtis seated this dazzling creature to his right, and, to the surprise of the company, her companion immediately seated himself on her other side. The ladies looked at each other and smiled, as much as to say, 'He is jealous—and no great wonder.' However, they talked to her across the body of her lord, and she to them, and she was a most piquant addition to the table, and full of spirit. She seemed devoted to her companion.

For all that she had a letter in her pocket,

which she intended to confide to one of those ladies she had never seen before in all her life; and she was now quietly examining their faces and judging their voices, as she conversed with them, merely to make the best selection of a confidante she could.

The breakfast did honour to the ship, and the Corsair praised the lobster curry, and made himself very agreeable all round.

Presently one of the ladies said to Mr. Castor, 'But where is Mr. Greaves?' Castor told her he had been disabled by a shot a lubberly gunner had dropped on his foot, and was confined to his cabin.

'Oh dear,' said the lady; 'poor Mr. Greaves! How unlucky he is!'

'Is it one of your officers?' asked the strange lady quietly.

'No, ma'am, he is a Queen's officer, lieutenant of the "Centaur," going out with us as passenger.'

Then the lady changed colour, but said nothing, and speedily turned the conversation; but the Corsair looked black as thunder, and became rather silent all of a sudden.

The ladies rose, and invited the fair stranger to go with them.

'Please excuse her,' said the Corsair, in a civil but commanding tone.



She seemed indifferent.

Soon after this an officer came in, and said, joyfully, 'Wind from the *nor*'-west.'

'Ah!' said the stranger; 'then we must leave you, sir. Come on deck, dear.'

When they got on deck the lady said, rather pettishly, 'Wind? I feel no wind.' Thereupon Mr. Castor pointed out to her a dark-blue line, about eight miles off, on the pale-blue water.

'Oh,' said she, 'that is wind, is it?'

'Yes, ma'am, and a good breeze too; it will be here in twenty minutes. Why, your boat is gone! Never mind, we will take you.'

'By all means,' said she, aloud; then, as she turned from him, she said, in a swift whisper, 'Sit near me in the boat; I've something for you.'

Now this conversation passed at the head of the companion-ladder, and Greaves heard the lady's voice, though not the words. He started violently, huddled on his clothes, and would have hobbled on deck; but the boat was brought along-side in full view from the port window of his cabin. He heard her grate the ship's side, and opened the window just as the lady was lowered into the boat. The chair was hoisted. The lady, with her veil down as she had come, took her seat on the stern thwart beside her companion, Castor sitting at the helm.

‘Shove off!’ was the word.

Then, as they turned the boat’s head round, the lady, who had seen Greaves through her veil, and had time to recognise him in spite of his beard, lifted her veil for one moment, and showed him the face of Ellen Ap Rice—that face he had loved so well, and suffered so cruelly for loving it. That face was now pale and eloquent beyond the power of words. There was self-reproach, a prayer for forgiveness, and, stranger still, a prayer to that injured friend—for *help*.

### PART III.

THE boat proceeded on her way. Ellen pointed to windward and said, ‘See, Edward, the dark line is ever so much nearer us.’

Laxton turned his head to windward directly, and some remarks passed between him and Castor.

Ellen had counted on this; she availed herself of it to whip a letter out of her pocket, and write in pencil an address upon the envelope. This she did under a shawl upon her lap. Then she kept quiet and waited an opportunity to do something more dangerous.

But none came; Laxton sat square with her, and could see every open movement of her hand.

They were within ten yards of the schooner, and the side manned to receive them.

Just then Laxton stood up and cried out, 'Forward there! Stand by to loose the jib.'

The moment he stood up Mrs. Laxton whipped the letter out from under her shawl and held it by her left side, but a little behind her, where nobody could see it except Castor. She shook it in her fingers very eloquently to make that officer observe it; then she leaned a little back and held it toward him, but, with female adroitness, turned it outward in her hand, so that not one of the many eyes in the boat could see it.

A moment of agony, and then she felt fingers much larger and harder than hers take it quietly and convey it stealthily away. Her panting bosom relieved itself of a sigh.

'What is the matter?' said the watchful Laxton.

'The matter? Nothing,' said she.

'I hope,' said he, 'you are not sorry to return to our humble craft.'

'I have seen none to compare with her,' said she, fencing boldly, but trembling to herself.

The next moment she was on board the schooner, and waited to see the boat off, and also to learn, if possible, whether Castor had her letter all safe, and would take it to its address.

To her consternation she heard Laxton invite Castor to come on board a moment.

She tried to catch Castor's eye, and warn him to do nothing of the kind.

But the light-hearted officer assented at once, and was on the quarter-deck next moment.

Laxton waved the others to fall back ; but Ellen would not leave them together : she was too apprehensive, knowing what she had just done.

‘ I have not the honour of knowing your name, sir ; mine is Edward Laxton.’

‘ Mine is Dick Castor, sir, at your service—and yours, ma’am.’ And he took this fair opportunity, and gave Ellen a look that made her cheeks burn, for it said, plainly, ‘ Your letter is in safe hands.’

‘ Well, Mr. Castor,’ said Laxton, ‘ you are the sort I want on board this schooner ; you are a man of nerve. Now I have never had a sailing-master yet, because I don’t need one—I am an enthusiast in navigation, have studied it for years, theoretically and practically—but I want a first lieutenant, a man with nerve. What do you say, now ? Five hundred a year, and a swell uniform.’

‘ Well, sir, the duds don’t tempt me ; but the pay is very handsome, and the craft is a beauty.’

Laxton bowed ceremoniously. ‘ Let me add,’ said he, gravely, ‘ that she is the forerunner of

many such vessels. At present, I believe, she is the only armed yacht afloat ; but, looking at the aspect of Europe, we may reasonably hope some nice little war or other will spring up ; then the " Rover " can play an honourable, and, indeed, a lucrative part. My first lieutenant's prize-money will not be less, I should imagine, than twenty thousand a year ; an agreeable addition to his pay, sir.'

'Delightful!' said Castor. 'But they sometimes hang a privateer at the yard-arm ; so I should be quite contented with my little five hundred and peaceful times.'

'Well, then, tell 'em to sheer off, and fetch your traps.'

'Yes, do, Mr. Castor,' said Ellen. 'You can send a line to explain.' That was to get her own letter delivered, the sly thing.

Castor shook his head. 'Sorry to disoblige you, ma'am, and to refuse you, sir ; but things can't be done that way. A seaman must not desert his ship on her voyage. Catch me in port and make the same offer, I'll jump mast-high at it.'

'Well,' said Laxton, 'what port are you to be caught in?'

'Why, it must be London or Hong-Kong. I shall be three months at Hong-Kong.'

Laxton said he had not intended to cruise so far west as that, but he would take a note of it. 'You are worth going a little out of the way for,' said he.

While he was making his note, 'Bang' went a gun from the 'Phœbe,' and she was seen hoisting sail with great rapidity; her rigging swarmed with men.

'There, that's for us,' said Castor.

'No hurry, sir,' said Laxton; 'he is going to tack instead of veering; she'll hang in the wind for half an hour. Forward there—hoist the flying-jib and the foretopsel. Helm aweather! Veer the ship. Mr. Castor, bid your men hold on. We must not part without a friendly glass.'

'Oh no,' said Ellen. 'I will order it.'

Some of the prime Madeira was immediately brought on deck; and, while they were all three drinking to each other, the impatient 'Phœbe' fired another gun. But Castor took it coolly; he knew Laxton was right, and the ship could not come round on the port tack in a hurry. He drank his second glass, shook hands with Laxton, and then with Mrs. Laxton, received once more an eloquent pressure of her soft hand, and this time returned it to give her confidence, and looked courage into her eyes, that met his anxiously. Then he put off; and though the 'Phœbe' was

now nearly a mile off, he easily ran along-side her before she paid off and got her head before the wind.

His mind was in a troubled state. He was dying to know what this lovely woman, who had fallen in love with him so suddenly, had written to him. But he would not open it right in sight of the schooner, and so many eyes. He was a very loyal fellow.

At a good distance he took it carefully out, and his countenance fell; for the letter was sealed and addressed,

*‘Lieut. Greaves, R.N.’*

Here was a disappointment, and a blow to the little amorous romance which Mr. Castor, who, among his other good qualities, was inflammable as tinder, had been constructing ever since the Corsair’s bride first drank to him and pressed his hand.

He made a terribly wry face, looking at the letter: but he said to himself, with a little grunt, ‘Well, there’s nothing lost that a friend gets.’

As soon as he had boarded the ‘Phœbe,’ and seen the boat replaced on the davits, the good-natured fellow ran down to Greaves’s cabin and found him sitting dejected, with his head down.

‘Cheer up, Mr. Greaves,’ cries Castor; ‘luck is changed. Here is a fair wind, and every rag

set, and the loveliest woman I ever clapped eyes on has been and written you a letter, and there it is.'

'It is from *her*!' cried Greaves, and began to open it all in a tremble. 'She is in trouble, Castor—I saw it in her face.'

'Trouble! not she. Schooner A1, and money in both pockets.'

'Trouble, I tell you, and great trouble, or she would never have written to me.' By this time he had opened the letter and was busied in the contents. 'It wasn't to me she wrote,' he sighed 'How could it be?' He read it through and then handed it to Castor.

The letter ran thus:

'I have written this in hopes I may be able to give it to some lady on board the "Phœbe" or to one of the officers, and that something may be done to rescue me, and prevent some terrible misfortune.

'My husband is a madman! It is his mania to pass for a pirate and frighten unarmed vessels. Only last week we fell in with a Dutch brig, and he hoisted a black flag with a white death's-head and cross-bones, and fired a shot across the Dutchman's bows. The Dutchman hove to directly, but took to his boats. Then Mr. Laxton thought he had done enough, so he fired a gun to leeward in token of amity; but the poor Dutchman did



not understand, and the crew pulled their boats toward Java Head, full ten miles off, and abandoned their ship. I told him it was too cruel; but he spoke quite harshly to me, and said that lubbers who didn't know the meaning of a gun to leeward had no business afloat. All I could persuade him to was to sail quite away, and let the poor Dutchmen see they could come back to their ship. She could not fly from them, because she was hove to.

‘He tried this experiment on the “Phœbe,” and got the men to join him in it. He told me every word I was to say to the officer. The three who were put in irons had a guinea apiece for it and double grog. He only left off because the officer who came on board was such a brave man and won his respect directly; for he is as brave as a lion himself. And that is the worst of it; if a frigate caught him playing the pirate and fired at him, he would be sure to fire back and court destruction.

‘His very crew are so attached to him and so highly paid—for he is extremely rich—and sailors are so reckless, that I am afraid they would fight almost anybody at a distance. But I think if they saw an officer on board in his uniform, and he spoke to them they would come to their senses, because they are many of them men-of-war's men. But, indeed, I fear he bribed some of them out of

the Queen's ships ; and I don't know what those men might not do, because they are deserters.

‘ It is my hope and prayer that the captain and officers of the “ Phœbe ” will, all of them, tell a great many other captains—especially of armed vessels—not to take the “ Rover ” for a real pirate and fire on him, but to come on board and put him under reasonable restraint, for his own sake and that of others at sea.

‘ As for myself, I believe my own life is hardly safe. He has fits of violence which he cannot help, poor fellow, and is very sorry for afterward ; but they are becoming more frequent, and he is getting worse in every way.

‘ But it is not for myself I write these lines so much as to prevent wholesale mischief. I behaved ill in marrying him, and must take my chance, and perhaps pay my penalty.

‘ ELLEN LAXTON.’

‘ Well, Castor,’ said Greaves, eagerly, ‘ what shall we do ? Will the captain let you take volunteers and board her ? ’

‘ Certainly not ! Why, here's a fair wind, and stunsels set to catch every puff.’

‘ For Heaven's sake take him her letter and try him ! ’

‘ I'll do that ; but it is no use.

He took the letter, and soon came back with a reply that Captain Curtis sympathised with the lady, and would make the case known to every master in his service.

‘And that is all he is game for!’ said Greaves, contemptuously. ‘Castor, lend me your arm; I can hobble on deck well enough.’

He got on deck, and the schooner was three miles to leeward and full a mile astern, with nothing set but her topsails and flying jib.

Greaves groaned aloud. ‘He means to part company; we shall never see her again.’ He groaned and went down to his cabin again.

He was mistaken. Laxton was only giving the ship a start in order to try rates of sailing. He set his magnificent mainsail and foresail and mainjib, and came up with the ship hand over head, the moderate breeze giving him an advantage.

Castor did not tell Greaves, for he thought it would only put him in a passion and do no good.

So the first intimation Greaves got was at about four P.M. He was seated, in deep sorrow, copying his lost sweetheart’s letter, in order to carry out her wishes, when the shadow of an enormous jib-sail fell on his paper. He looked up, and saw the schooner gliding majestically alongside, within pistol-shot.

He flew on deck, in spite of his lame foot, and made the wildest propositions. He wanted a broadside fired at the schooner's masts to disable her ; wanted Captain Curtis to take the wind out of her sails and run on to her, grapple her and board her.

To all this, as might be supposed, Captain Curtis turned a deaf ear.

‘Interfere with violence between man and wife, sir ! Do you think I am as mad as he is ? Attack a commander who has just breakfasted with me merely because he has got a tile loose ! Pray compose yourself, Mr. Greaves, and don't talk nonsense. I shall keep my course and take no notice of his capers. And, Mr. Greaves, I am sorry for you ; you are out of luck—but every dog has his day. Be patient, man, for God's sake ! and remember you serve her Majesty, and should be the last to defy the law. You should set an example, sir.’

This brought that excellent officer to his bearings, and he sat down all of a heap and was silent, but tears of agony came out of his eyes ; and presently something occurred that made him start up in fury again.

For Laxton's quick eye had noticed him and his wild appeals, and he sent down for Mrs. Laxton. When she came up he said, ‘My dear, there's a

gentleman on deck who did not breakfast with us. There he sits, abaft the mainmast, looking daggers at us. Do you know him?’

Ellen started.

‘Ah, you do know him. Tell me his name.’

‘His name is Arthur Greaves.’

‘What, the same that was spoony on you when I sailed into Tenby Harbour?’

‘Yes, yes. Pray, spare me the sight of the man I wronged so wickedly.’

‘Spare you the sight, you lying devil! Why, you raised your veil to see him the better.’ With these words he caught her hastily round the waist with his powerful arm, and held her in that affectionate position while he made his ironical adieus to the ship he was outsailing.

During the above dialogue, the schooner being directly under the ship’s lee, the wind was taken out of the swifter craft’s sails, and the two vessels hung together a minute; but soon the schooner forged ahead, and glided gradually away, steering a more southerly course; and still those two figures were seen interlaced upon her deck, in spite of the lady’s letter in Greaves’s possession.

‘The hell of impotence,’ says an old writer. Poor Greaves suffered that hell all the time the schooner ran along-side the ship, and nobody would help him board her, or grapple her, or sink her.

Then was added the hell of jealousy ; his eyes were blasted and his soul sickened with the actual picture of his old sweetheart embraced by her lord and master before all the world. He had her letter, addressed (though not written) to him ; but Laxton had *her*, and the picture of possession was public. Greaves shook his fist at him with impotent fury, howled impotent curses at him, that everybody heard, even the ladies, who had come on deck well pleased, seeing only the surface of things, and were all aghast when Greaves came up all of a sudden, and stormed and raged at what to them was that pretty ship and justly affectionate commander ; still more aghast when all this torrent came to a climax, and the strong man fell down in a fit, and was carried, gnashing and foaming and insensible to his cabin.

On board the schooner all was not so rosy as it looked. Mrs. Laxton, quietly imprisoned by an iron hand, and forced into a pictorial attitude of affection quite out of character with her real sentiments—which at that moment were fear, repugnance, remorse, and shame—quivered and writhed in that velvet-iron embrace : her cheeks were red, at first, with burning blushes ; but by degrees they became very pale ; her lips quivered, and lost all colour ; and, soon after Greaves was carried below, her body began to collapse,

and at last she was evidently about to faint ; but her changeable husband looked in her face, uttered a cry of dismay, and supported her, with a world of tenderness, into the cabin, and laying her on a sofa, recovered her with all the usual expedients, and then soothed her with the tenderest expressions of solicitude and devotion.

It was not the first time his tyranny had ended in adoration and tenderness. The couple had shed many tears of reconciliation ; but the finest fabric wears out in time ; and the blessed shade of Lord Byron must forgive me if I declare that even ‘ Pique her and soothe by turns ’ may lose its charm by what Shakespeare calls ‘ damnable iteration.’ The reader, indeed, might gather as much from Mrs. Laxton’s reply to her husband’s gushing tenderness. ‘ There—there—I know you love me—in your way ; and, if you do, please leave me in peace, for I am quite worn out.’

‘ Queen of my soul, your lightest word is a command,’ said the now chivalrous spouse ; impressed a delicate kiss upon her brow, and retired backward with a gaze of veneration, as from the presence of his sovereign.

This sentiment of excessive veneration did not, however, last twenty-four hours. He thought the matter over, and early next morning he brought a paint-pot into the cabin, and having

stirred some of his wife's mille-fleur into it, proceeded to draw, and then paint, a certain word over a small cupboard or locker in the state cabin.

Mrs. Laxton came in, and found him so employed. 'What a horrid smell!' said she, pettishly. 'Paint!'

'What, do you smell it?' said he, in a humble, apologetic tone. 'I thought I had succeeded in disguising it with something more agreeable to the nostrils of beauty—the essence of a thousand flowers.'

'You have not, then; and what *are* you doing?'

'Painting a word on this locker. A salutary word. Behold, queen of this ship and your husband's heart!' and he showed her the word 'Discipline' beautifully written in large letters and in an arch.

She began to quake a little; but being high-spirited, she said, 'Yes, it is a salutary word, and if it had been applied to you when a boy, it would be all the better for you now—and for me too.'

'It would,' said he, gravely. 'But *I* had no true friend to correct the little faults of youth. You have. You have a husband, who knows how to sail a woman. "Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re," that's the rule, when one is blessed,



and honoured, and tormented with the charge of capricious beauty.'

Then Mrs. Laxton took fright, and said, cajolingly, she really believed he was the wisest man upon the seas.

As he was, at all events, one of the vainest, this so gratified him that no farther allusion to her faults was made that day.

The next morning two sailors had a fight for the affections of Susan Tucker, Mrs. Laxton's Welsh maid, whom he had made her colour and rig out as Zulema, in that little comedy of Castor.

Thereupon Laxton complained to her, and said, 'I cannot have the peace of the vessel disturbed by that hussey. I shall discharge her.'

'What, into the sea, dear?' said Mrs. Laxton, rather pertly.

'No, love. Though I don't see why I shouldn't launch her in an open boat, with a compass, and a loaf, and a barrel of water, and a bottle of hair-oil—she uses that, the nasty little pig. That sort of thing has been done, on less provocation, to Captain Blyth, and many others. No, I shall fire across the bows of the first home-ward-bound——'

Mrs. Laxton uttered a loud sigh of dismay.

'And send that little apple of discord back to its own orchard in South Wales—he! he! he!'

This was no laughing matter to poor Mrs. Laxton. She clasped her hands. 'Oh, Edward, show me some mercy! I have never been without a woman about me. Oh, pray don't let me be alone in a ship, surrounded by men, and not one woman!'

'For shame, Ellen!' said he, severely. 'You are a pirate's bride, and must rise above your sex. I devote myself to your service as lady's-maid. It would be odd indeed if a man who can pass a weather earring, couldn't humble-cum-stumble a woman's stays.'

'That is not it. If she goes, my life will not be safe.'

'Not safe! with me to look after it?'

'No, you villain! you hypocrite! If she goes my life will not be safe from *you*.' She was wild with anger and fear.

'These are hard words,' said he, sorrowfully. Then, firmly, 'I see the time has come for discipline;' and though his words were wondrous calm, he seized her suddenly by the nape of the neck. She uttered one scream; the next he stopped with his other hand, and she bit it to the bone; but he never winced. 'Come,' said he, 'I'll use no unnecessary violence. "Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re," is the sailing order;' and in a few moments she was bundled, struggling

violently, into the locker, and the key turned on her.

Though his hand bled freely he kept his word, and used no unnecessary violence, provided you grant him, by way of postulate, that it was *necessary* to put her into that locker at all. Only as she fought and bit and scratched and kicked and wriggled her very best, the necessary violence was considerable.

That was her fault, not his, he conceived. He used no unnecessary violence. He now got a napkin and tied up his hand. Then he took a centre-bit and bored holes in the panelled door.

This, he informed his prisoner, was necessary. 'Without a constant supply of fresh air you would be uncomfortable ; and your comfort is very dear to me.'

He then remarked that she ought to have a sentinel. Respect, as well as safe custody, demanded that ; and, as he was his own factotum, he would discharge that function. Accordingly, he marched past the locker, to and fro, without ceasing, till there was a knock at his cabin door, and a sail reported to leeward.

'Homeward bound ?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Then close up with her, and get my gig ready to board her.'

When he came near her, it proved to be one of Mr. Green's tea ships; so he fired a gun to leeward, instead of sending a shot across her bows; and then he launched his gig, with Susan blubbering in the stern-sheets, and her clothes in a hammock.

The ship, for a wonder, condescended to slack her main-sheet, and the boat, being very swift, ran up to her astern, and the officer in command of the boat offered forty pounds for a passenger.

They happened to want a female servant, and so they took her, with a little grumbling; and she got her fare, or the greater portion of it, paid her for wages at Southampton. So I am told, however.

The pursuit and capture of the ship, and the hoisting on board of Susan, were all reported, during their actual progress, with great bonhomie, to Mrs. Laxton, through her air-holes, by her spouse and sentinel, and received with sobbing and sullen tears.

When the boat came back, Laxton put on a bright and cheerful air. 'There,' said he to his prisoner, 'the bone of contention is gone, and peace is restored—nautical peace and domestic peace. Aren't you glad?'

No answer.

‘Don’t be sulky, dear. That shows a bad disposition, and calls for discipline. Open your mind to me. This is the cellular system, universally approved. How do you find it work? How do you feel, love? A little—subjugated—eh? Tell the truth now.’

‘Yes; quite subjugated,’ said a faint voice. ‘Pray let me out.’

‘With pleasure, dear. Why did you not ask me before?’

He opened the door, and there was the poor woman, crouched in a cupboard that only just held her, seated on the ground with her knees half-way to her chin. She came out with her eyes as wild as any beast of the forest that had been caught in a trap, and tottered to a seat. She ran her white hands recklessly into her hair and rocked herself. ‘Oh my God!’ she cried. ‘Susan gone; and I am alone with a madman! I’m a lost woman!’

Laxton pitied her distress, and set himself to cool her fears. ‘Don’t talk like that, dearest,’ said he; ‘a little discipline is wholesome. What have you to fear from a man whose sportive ensign, no doubt, is a death’s-head and cross-bones? but his motto is “*Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re.*” Look here; here is an ensanguined cloth. Mine is the only blood that has been shed in our little

loving encounter ; the only blood that ever shall be shed between us, sweet tigress of my soul.'

'Forgive me !' said she, trembling all over—  
'I was so frightened.'

'Forgive you, dearest ! Why, you know a bite from you is sweeter to me than a kiss from any other woman. It was rapturous. Bite me again, love ; scratch me ; beat me. Sweet, darling Nelly, teach a brute and ruffian to dare to discipline his lovely queen.'

'No, no ; I won't touch you. You don't love me.'

'Not love you ? Ah, cruel Nelly ! What man ever loved a woman as I love you ?'

'Give me a proof—some better proof than locking me up in that horrid hole.'

'Any proof you like.'

'Take me on shore. I'm not a sailor ; and I begin to pine for the land.'

'Of course you do,' said Laxton, who was now all indulgence. 'Choose your land at once. There's Australia to leeward.'

'Yes, six thousand miles. Let us go to China, and drink tea together, dear, fresh gathered.'

'The desire is natural,' said Laxton, like a nurse making life sweet to a refractory child. 'I'll go on deck and alter her course directly. By-the-

bye, where did that Castor say I should find him ?’

Thus, even in her deplorable condition, and just let out of prison, did a terrified but masterly woman manipulate her maniac.

But what she endured in the course of a very few days was enough to unhinge a lady for life. Laxton took to brooding, and often passed his hand over his brow with a weird, terrified look. Then she watched him with terror. On deck he went into furies about the most trifling things, and threatened his best seamen with the cat.

Ellen could hear his voice raging above, and sat trembling as his step came down the ladder after these explosions. But at the cabin door he deposited violence, and his mania took another turn. He disciplined her every day, and it seemed to cool him. She made no resistance, and they conversed amicably on different sides of the prison, she admitting that discipline was good for her mind.

After a time she would say, ‘Edward, I’m sorry to say this contracted position pains my limbs.’

‘We must provide for that. I’ll build another yacht, with more room in it—for *everything*.’

‘Do, dear ; and, meantime, I am afraid I must ask you to let me out.’

‘ Oh, by all means. Everything must give way to your comfort.’

Unfortunately, Mr. Laxton, as his reason became weaker, set up a spy; and this fellow wormed out that one of the crew had seen Castor take a letter on the sly from Mrs. Laxton. This upset his mind altogether. He burst in upon her, looking fearful. ‘ So you write love-letters to strangers, do you ? ’ he roared.

‘ No, no ! Who dares say so ? ’

‘ Who dares deny it ? You were seen to give one to that Castor, a man you had only spoken to once, you false-hearted, adulterous hussey ! ’

‘ It was only a letter to my father.’

‘ Liar ! it was a love-letter. And that Greaves couldn’t show his face but you must unveil to him. Damnation ! There, you are driving me mad ! But you shall not escape, nor your paramours elect. I know where to find *them* ; and *you* I’ve got.’

The poor creature began to shiver. ‘ I am full of faults,’ she whimpered. ‘ Discipline me, dear. You will mend me in time.’

‘ No, Judas ! ’ roared the madman. ‘ I have disciplined you in vain. Discipline ! it is wasted on such a character. I must try *extinction*.’

‘ What, would you kill me, Edward ? ’

‘ Dead as a herring.’



‘God have mercy on me!’

‘That’s *his* affair; *mine* is to see that you deceive and delude no more able navigators, and drive them mad. But don’t you think I’m going to shed your blood. I’m too fond of you, traitress—viper—hussey—demon of deceit! And don’t you think you shall die alone. No. You shall perish with your Castor and your Greaves, cursed triumvirate. I know where to find them both. This very day I’ll catch them, and lash them to the furniture, scuttle my beloved schooner and set the water bubbling slowly up till it sucks you all three down to the bottom. Sit down on that ottoman, if you please, loveliest and wickedest of all God’s creatures.’

‘I will not. I will scream if you lay a hand on me.’

‘In that case,’ said he, ‘you will drive me to a thing I detest, and that is violence.’ And he drew out a revolver.

Then she put up her quivering hands, and, pale and quaking in every limb, submitted. She sat down on the ottoman, and he produced some gold cord and fine silk cord. With the silk he tied her hair most artistically to the table, and with the gold cord he bound her hands behind her back, and reduced her to utter helplessness. This done with great care and dexterity, he bade her

observe, with a sneer, that his revolver was not loaded. He loaded it and another before her eyes, put them in his pocket, locked the cabin, and went on deck, leaving her more dead than alive.

## PART IV.

ALL this time the schooner had been running thirteen knots an hour before a south-west breeze, and Laxton soon saw a port under his lee, with many ships at anchor. The sight fired his poor brain; he unfurled two black pennants with a white head and cross-bones, one at each of his mast-heads, and flew a similar ensign at his main peak, and so stood in for the anchorage, like a black kite swooping into a poultry-yard.

Greaves soon came to from his fit; but he had a racking pain across the brow, and the doctor dreaded brain-fever. However, a violent bleeding relieved the sufferer, and Nature, relenting, sent this much-enduring man a long, heavy sleep, whence he awoke with an even pulse, but fell into a sullen, dogged state of mind, sustained only by some vague and not very reasonable hope of vengeance.

But now the ladies interfered; from one to

another they had picked up some of his story. He was the one hero of romance in the ship ; and his ill-luck, bodily and mental, before their eyes, their hearts melted with pity and they came to the rescue. However timid a single lady may be, four can find courage when acting in concert. They visited him in his cabin in pairs ; they made him in one day, by division of labour, a fine cloth shoe for his bad foot ; they petted him, and poured consolation on him ; and one of them, Mrs. General Meredith, who had a mellow, sympathetic voice, after beating coyly about the bush a bit, wormed his whole story out of him, and instantly told it to the others, and they were quite happy the rest of the voyage, having a real live love story to talk over. Mrs. Meredith gave him her address at Hong-Kong, and made him promise to call on her.

At last they reached that port, and the passengers dispersed. Greaves went on board the ' Centaur ' and was heartily welcomed.

He reported his arrival to the admiral, and fell at once into the routine of duty. He intended to confide in his good-natured friend the second mate, but was deterred by hearing that a new steam-corvette was about to be despatched to the island to look after pirates. She was to be ready in less than a month.

Nothing was more likely than that the admiral would give the command to his flag-lieutenant: indeed, the chances were five to one. So Greaves said to himself, 'I'll hold my tongue about that madman, and then if I have the good-luck to fall in with him, I can pretend to take him for a pirate, and board him, and rescue her.'

So he held his tongue, and in due course it was notified to him that he was to command the corvette as soon as her armament should be complete.

It did not escape Lieutenant Greaves that the mad cruiser might be cruising in Polynesia while he was groping the Chinese islands with his corvette. Still there was a chance; and as it seemed the only one, his sad heart clung to it. In England, time and a serious malady had closed his wound; but the sight of Ellen's face, pale and unhappy, and the possession of her letter, which proved that she feared her husband more than she loved him, had opened his wound again, and renewed all his love and all his pain.

But while he was waiting and sickening with impatience at the delays in fitting out his corvette for service, an incident occurred that struck all his plans aside in a moment, and taught him how impossible it is for a man to foresee what a single day may bring forth.

Admiral Hervey was on the quarter-deck of the 'Centaur,' and a group of his officers conversing to leeward of him, at a respectful distance, when suddenly a schooner, making for the port, hoisted a black flag with death's-head and cross-bones at her mast-heads and her main-peak, and came bowling in. She steered right for the 'Centaur,' just shaved her stern, ran on about a cable's length, hove up in the wind, and anchored between the flag-ship and the port she was watching.

It really looked as if this comic pirate meant to pour his little broadside into the mighty 'Centaur,' and get blown out of the water in a moment.

Then Greaves began to ask himself whether he was right not to tell the admiral all about this vessel. But while he hesitated that worthy did not. He grinned at the absurdity of the thing, but he frowned at the impudence. 'This won't do,' he said. Then, turning toward his officers, 'Lieutenant Greaves!'

'Sir.'

'Take an armed party, and bring the master of that schooner to me.'

'Ay, sir.'

In a very few minutes Lieutenant Greaves, with two boats containing armed sailors and

marines, and the union-jack flying, put off from the 'Centaur' and boarded the schooner.

At sight of his cocked hat the schooner's men slunk forward and abandoned their commander. He sat aft, on a barrel of gunpowder, a revolver in each hand, and vociferated.

Greaves stepped up and fixed his eye on him. He was raving mad, and dangerous. Greaves ordered two stout fellows to go round him while he advanced. Then, still fixing his eye on the maniac, he so mesmerised him that he did not notice the other assailants. In one moment they pinned him behind, and Greaves bounded on him like a cat. Bang! bang! went two shots ploughing the deck, and Laxton was secured and tied, and bundled, shrieking, cursing, and foaming, on board one of the boats, and taken to the flagship.

Meantime, Greaves stepped forward, and said a few words to the men: 'Now then, Jack, do you want to get into trouble?'

The men's caps went off in a moment. 'No, your honour; it ain't our fault.'

'Then strike those ridiculous colours, and fly your union-jack at the main-peak; this schooner is under royal command for the present.'

'Ay, ay, sir.'

This was done in a moment, and meantime

Greaves ran down the companion-ladder, and knocked at the cabin-door.

No answer.

Knocked again, and listened.

He heard a faint moan.

He drew back as far as he could, ran furiously at the door, and gave it such a tremendous kick with his sound foot that the lock gave way and the door burst open.

Then the scared Ellen saw a cocked hat in the door-way, and the next moment her old lover was by her side, untying her hair, and cutting the ligatures carefully, with tender ejaculations of pity.

‘Oh, Arthur!’ she sobbed. ‘Ah! go away—he will kill us both!’

‘No, no; don’t you be frightened. He is under arrest; and I command the schooner, by the admiral’s orders. Don’t tremble so, darling; it is all over. Why, you are under the guns of the flag-ship, and you have got me. Oh, my poor Ellen! did ever I think to see you used like this?’

So then they had a cry together; and he said everything in the world to comfort her.

But it was not to be done in a moment. The bonds were gone, but the outrage remained. ‘I want a woman,’ she cried, and hid her face. ‘Arthur, bring me a woman.’

‘That I will,’ said he ; and, seeing paper and envelopes on a table, he dashed off a line to the admiral :

‘Lady on board the schooner in great distress. May I send her ashore to female friends ? ’

He sent the remaining boat off with this, and the answer came back directly :

‘Act according to your discretion. You can go ashore.’

As soon as he got this he told Mrs. Laxton he would take her to Mrs. General Meredith, or invite that lady on board.

Mrs. Laxton said she felt unable to move ; so then Greaves despatched a midshipman in the boat, with a hasty line, and assisted Mrs. Laxton to the sofa, and, holding her hand, begged her to dismiss all her fears.

She was too shaken, however, to do that, and sat crying and quivering ; she seemed ashamed, too, and humiliated. So this honest fellow, thinking she would perhaps be glad if he left her, placed two marines at her cabin door, to give her confidence, and went on deck and gave some orders, which were promptly obeyed.

But very soon he was sent for to the cabin. ‘Pray don’t desert me,’ said Mrs. Laxton ; ‘the



sight of you gives me courage.' After a while she said, 'Ah, you return good for evil.'

'Don't talk like that,' said he. 'Why, I am the happiest fellow afloat now. I got your letter; but I never thought I should be so happy as to rescue you.'

'Happy!' said she. 'I shall never be happy again. And I don't believe you will. Pray don't forget I am a married woman.'

'I don't forget that.'

'Married to a madman. I hope no harm will come to him.'

'I will take care no harm comes to *you*.'

Then Greaves, who had read no French novels, and respected the marriage tie, became more distant and respectful, and, to encourage her, said, 'Mrs. Laxton, the lady I have sent to admire you on board the ship, and I am sure, if she gets my letter, she will do more for you than a poor fellow like me can, now you are out of danger. She is a general's wife, and was very kind to me.'

'You are very good and thoughtful,' said Mrs. Laxton.

Then there was an awkward silence, and it was broken by the arrival of the boat with General Meredith and his wife.

Greaves got them on board the schooner, shook

hands with the lady, and proposed to her to see Mrs. Laxton alone.

‘You are right,’ said she.

Greaves showed her to the cabin ; and I don’t know all that passed, but in a very short time these ladies, who had never met but once, were kissing each other, with wet eyes.

Mrs. Meredith insisted on taking her new friend home with her. Mrs. Laxton acquiesced joyfully ; and for once, a basket of lady’s clothes was packed in five minutes.

The boat put off again, and Greaves looked sad. So Mrs. Meredith smiled to him, and said, ‘You know where to find us. Don’t be long.’

Greaves watched the boat till it was lost among the small shipping, then placed the midshipman in charge, and went at once on board the flagship.

Here he heard that the master of the schooner had been taken on the quarterdeck, and requested, civilly enough, to explain his extraordinary conduct, but had sworn at the admiral, and called him an old woman ; whereupon the admiral had not shown any anger, but had said, ‘Clap him in irons,’ concluding that was what he expected and desired.

Then this doughty sailor, Greaves, who had

been going to kill his rival at sight, &c., was seized with compunction the moment that rival was powerless. He went boldly to the admiral, and asked leave to give information. He handed him Mrs. Laxton's letter.

‘Oh,’ said the admiral, ‘then he is mad?’

‘As a March hare, sir. And I’m afraid putting him in irons will make him worse. It is a case for a lunatic asylum.’

‘You won’t find one here; but the marine hospital has a ward for lunatics. I know that, for we had to send a foretop-man there last week. I’ll give you an order, and you can take him ashore at once.’

Then Greaves actually took the poor wretch who had wrecked his happiness, and was now himself a wreck, on board a boat and conveyed him to the hospital, and instructed the manager not to show him any unnecessary severity, but to guard against self-destruction.

Then he went directly to Mrs. Meredith and reported what he had done.

Mrs. Laxton, in spite of all remonstrance, would go and see her husband that night; but she found him in a strait-waistcoat, foaming and furious, and using such language she was obliged to retire horror-stricken.

About five in the morning he burst a blood-

vessel in the brain, and at noon next day all his troubles were over.

Mrs. Laxton mourned him, and buried him, and Greaves held aloof, not liking to go near her just now; for he was too frank and simple to pretend he shared her grief. Yet he had sense enough to understand that, at such a time, a generous spirit remembers only a man's good qualities, and Laxton had many; but even when he married Ellen Ap Rice the seeds were in him of that malady which destroyed him at last.

However, if Greaves was out of the widow's sight, he was not out of her mind, for Mrs. Meredith knew his whole tale, and told her how he had gone to Tenby, and had taken her marriage to heart, and had been at death's door in London.

At last Greaves called, having the excuse of a message from the admiral. He wished to know if Mrs. Laxton would sell eight of her guns to the government, and also allow her sailors to be drafted into his ships, all but two, that number being sufficient to take care of her vessel in port.

Mrs. Laxton said, 'I shall do nothing of the kind without *your* advice, Arthur—Mr. Greaves. Why, how am I to get home?'

Then Greaves advised her to sell the guns, for they were worse than useless; but to part with the men only on condition that the admiral would

man the schooner, 'when required,' with new hands that had never played tricks at sea under her late commander.

Greaves called once or twice in the course of this negotiation, and thought Ellen had never looked so lovely as in her widow's cap. But he felt bound to abstain from making love, though he was bursting with it, and both ladies saw it, and pretended not.

But one day he came to them in great dismay, and told them the guns had been bought for the steam-corvette he was to command, and she would be ready in a week, and he should have to go on his cruise. 'I am very unfortunate,' said he.

The words were scarcely out of his mouth when his friend, the second lieutenant, was announced. 'Beg pardon, ladies; but here's a letter from the admiral for Greaves; and we all hope it's promotion.'

He produced an enormous letter, and, sure enough, Lieutenant Greaves was now a commander. 'Hurrah!' shouted the second lieutenant, and retired.

'This would have made me very happy once,' said Greaves; then cast a despairing look at Ellen, and went off all in a hurry, not to break down.

Then Mrs. Laxton had a cry round her friend's neck.

But next day the same Greaves came in all joyous. 'I was a fool,' said he. 'I forgot the rule of the service. An admiral can't have two commanders. That fine fellow, who came after me with the news, is lieutenant in my place, and I'm to go home for orders.'

'Oh, I'm so glad!' said Ellen. 'When must you go?'

'Oh, I dare say I might stay another fortnight or so. When are you going home, Mrs. Laxton?'

'The very first opportunity; and Mrs. Meredith is to go with me. Won't it be nice?'

'Yes,' said he; 'but it would be nicer if I could be third man. But no such luck for me, I suppose.'

Those two ladies now put their heads together, and boarded the admiral. He knew Mrs. Meredith; but was a little surprised, though too true a tar to be displeased. They were received in his cabin, and opened their business.

Mrs. Laxton wanted to go home immediately in her schooner, and she had no crew.

'Well, madam, you are not to suffer for your civility to *us*. We will man your schooner for you in forty-eight hours.'

‘Oh, thank you, admiral! But the worst of it is I have no one to command her.’

‘No sailing-master?’

‘No; my poor husband sailed her himself.’

‘Ay, I remember, poor fellow. Besides,’ (looking at the beautiful widow), ‘I would not trust you to a sailing-master.’

‘What we thought, admiral, was, that as we gave up the guns and the sailors, perhaps you would be so kind as to lend us an officer.’

‘What! out of her Majesty’s fleet? I could not do that. But, now I think of it, I’ve got the very man for you. Here’s Commander Greaves, going home on his promotion. He is as good an officer as any on the station.’

‘Oh, admiral, if *you* think so well of him, he will be a godsend to poor us.’

‘Well, then, he is at your service, ladies; and you could not do better.’

Greaves was a proud and joyful man. ‘My luck has turned,’ said he.

He ballasted the schooner and provisioned her at Mrs. Laxton’s expense, who had received a large sum of money for her guns. The two ladies occupied the magnificent cabin. He took a humbler berth, weighed anchor, and away for Old England.

I shall not give the reader any nautical details

of another voyage, but a brief sketch of things distinct from navigation that happened on board.

Mrs. Laxton was coy for some days; then friendly; then affectionate; and, off the Cape, tyrannical. 'You are not the Arthur Greaves I remember,' said she; 'he had not a horrid beard.'

'Why, I suffered for not having one,' said he.

'What I mean is,' said she, 'you do not awaken in me the associations you would but for that—appendage.'

'You wish those associations awakened?'

'I don't know. Do you?'

'Indeed I do.'

'Then let me see you as you used to be—Arthur.'

The beard came off next morning.

'Ah!' said Mrs. Laxton; and, to do her justice, she felt a little compunction at her tyranny, and disposed to reconcile him to his loss. She was so kind to him that, at Madeira, he asked her to marry him.

'To be sure I will,' said she—'some day. Why, I believe we are engaged?'

'I am sure of it,' said he.

'Then, of course, I *must* marry you. But there's one—little—condition.'

'Must I grow a beard again?'



‘No. The condition is— I am afraid you won’t like it.’

‘Perhaps not; but I don’t care, if I am to be paid by marrying you.’

‘Well, then, it is—you must leave the service.’

‘Leave the service! You cannot be serious? What, just when I am on the road to the red flag at the fore! Besides, how are we to live? I have no other means at present, and I am not going to wait for dead men’s shoes.’

‘Papa is rich, *dear*, and I can sell the yacht for a trading vessel. She is worth ten thousand pounds, I’m told.’

‘Oh, then I am to be idle, and eat my wife’s bread?’

‘And butter, *dear*. I promise it shall not be dry bread.’

‘I prefer a crust, earned like a man.’

‘You don’t mean to say that you won’t leave the service to oblige *me, sir?*’

‘Anything else you like; but I cannot leave the service.’

‘Then I can’t marry you, my sailor bold,’ chanted the tyrannical widow, and retired to her cabin.

She told Mrs. Meredith, and that lady scolded her and lectured her till she pouted and was very nearly crying.

However, she vouchsafed an explanation: 'One requires change. I have been the slave of one man, and now I *must* be the tyrant of another.'

Mrs. Meredith suggested that rational freedom would be a sufficient change from her condition under Laxton.

'Rational freedom!' said the widow, contemptuously; 'that is neither one thing nor the other. I will be a slave or a tyrant. He will give in, as he did about the beard, if you don't interfere. I'll be cross one day, and affectionate the next, and all sweetness the next. He will soon find out which he likes best, and he will give in, poor dear fellow!'

I suppose that in a voyage round the world these arts might have conquered; but they sighted the Lizard without Greaves yielding, and both were getting unhappy; so Mrs. Meredith got them together and proposed she should marry him, and if, in one year after marriage, she insisted on his leaving the service he would be bound in honour to do so.

'I am afraid that comes to the same thing,' said Greaves.

'No, it does not,' said Mrs. Meredith. 'Long before a year she will have given up her nonsensical notion that wives can be happy tyrannising over the man they love, and you will be master.'

‘Aha!’ said Mrs. Laxton; ‘we shall see.’

This being settled, Ellen suddenly appeared with her engaged ring on her finger, and was so loving that Greaves was almost in heaven. They landed Mrs. Meredith with all the honours at Plymouth, and telegraphed the Mayor of Tenby. Next day they sailed into the Welsh harbour and landed. They were both received with open arms by the mayor and old Dewar, and it was the happiest house in Wales.

Ellen stayed at home; but Greaves lived on board the ship till the wedding-day.

Ellen, still on the doctrine of opposition, would be cried in church, because the last time she had been married by licence; and, as she had sailed away from church the first time, she would travel by land, and no farther than St. David’s.

They were soon back at Tenby; and she ordered Greaves to take her on board the yacht, with a black leather bag.

‘Take that into the cabin, dear,’ said she.

Then she took some curious keys out of her pocket, and opened a secret place that nobody would have discovered. She showed him a great many bags of gold and a pile of bank notes. ‘We are not so very poor, Arthur,’ said she. ‘You will have a little butter to your bread; you know I promised you should. And there is money

settled on me; and he left me a great deal of money besides, when he was in his senses, poor fellow! I could not tell before, or papa would have had it settled on me; and that lowers a husband. Being hen-pecked a *very little—quite privately*—does not,’ said she, cajolingly.

Greaves was delighted, within certain limits. ‘I am glad to find you are rich,’ said he; ‘but I hope you won’t make me leave the service. Money is not everything.’

‘I promise never to discharge you from *my* service, dear. I know your value too well.’

They spent a happy fortnight in Tenby as man and wife.

One day they walked on the south sands, and somehow found themselves in Merlin’s Cave.

Here Ellen sat, with her head on that faithful shoulder, and he looking down on her with inexpressible tenderness.

Presently she gave a scream, and started up, and was out of the cavern in a moment. He followed her, a little alarmed. ‘What is the matter?’

‘Oh, Arthur, a dream! Such a dreadful one! I dreamed I played you false, and married a gentleman with a beard, and he was mad, and took me all round the world, and ill-used me, and tied me by the hair, and you rescued me;

and then I found, too late, it was you I esteemed and loved, and so we were parted for ever. Oh, what a dream! *And* so vivid!’

‘How extraordinary!’ said he. ‘Would you believe I dreamed that I lost you in that very way, and was awfully ill, and went to sea again, and found you lashed to a table by your beautiful hair, and lost to me for ever?’

‘Poor Arthur! What a blessing it was only a dream!’

Soon after this little historical arrangement they settled in London; and Mrs. Greaves, being as beautiful as ever, and extremely rich, exerted her powers of pleasing to advance her husband’s interests. The consequence is, he remains in the service, but is at present employed in the Education Department. She no longer says he must leave the service; her complaint now is that she loves him too well to govern him properly. But she is firm on this, that, if he takes a command, she shall go with him; and she will do it too.

Her ripe beauty is dazzling; she is known to be rich. The young fellows look from her to her husband and say, ‘What on earth could she have seen in that man to marry him?’

I wonder how many of these young swells will vie with him in earnest, and earn a lovely woman both by doing and suffering?



## *THE HISTORY OF AN ACRE.*

*A.D.* 1616.—The ‘Swan Inn,’ Knightsbridge, with a pightle of land and three acres of meadow skirting Hyde Park, was leased by the Freeholder, Agmondisham Muscamp, to Giles Broncham, of Knightsbridge, Winifred his wife, and Roger their son ; rent 30*l.* a year.

*A.D.* 1634.—The same Freeholder leased the above to Richard Callawaie and his son, for their lives ; rent 30*l.* a year.

*A.D.* 1671.—The above lease was surrendered, and a new one granted to Richard Callawaie, the younger, for forty-two years ; rent 42*l.*

*October 19 and 20, A.D.* 1674.—The then Freeholder, William Muscamp, Jane his wife, and Ambrose their son, sold the property, subject to Callawaie’s lease and a mortgage of 200*l.* to Richard Portress, Baker and Citizen of London, for 680*l.*

*December 5, A.D.* 1674.—Portress sold to Robert Cole for a trifling profit.

*March 17, A.D. 1682.*—Cole mortgaged the property to Squire Howland, of Streatham, for 200*l.* with forfeiture for ever if not redeemed by payment of 212*l.*, on or before September 18, 1682. This marks the tightness of money in those days, and the high interest paid on undeniable security. The terms of the forfeiture were rigorous, and the 212*l.* was not paid; but the mortgagee showed forbearance. He even allowed Cole to divide the security, and sell the odd three acres, in 1684, to Richard Callawaie, for 180*l.* For this sum was then conveyed the site of all the buildings now abutting on Hyde Park, from the ‘Corner’ to opposite Sloane Street, and including, *inter alia*, nearly the whole of Lord Rosebery’s site.

*July, A.D. 1686.*—Nicholas Burchade, Goldsmith and Citizen of London, purchased the ‘Swan’ and pightle (subject to Iveson’s lease for 21 years at 50*l.* a year). He paid to Howland, the patient mortgagee, 239*l.* 15*s.*; to Cole and his wife, 700*l.*

But in less than a year he sold to Edward Billing, Tobacconist, for 602*l.* 10*s.*

Billing may be assumed to have also purchased Callawaie’s lot, for though no negotiation either with Burchade or Billing is disclosed in the recitals, Callawaie’s interest in the property disappears



between 1686 and 1719, and the heirs of Billing are found possessed of the whole property.

*A.D.* 1701.—Edward Billing made a will, leaving to his wife the ‘Swan’ and pightle for her life, and this is the first document which defines that property precisely.

*July, A.D.* 1719.—James Billing, of Boston, Carpenter, and Mary his wife, sold to John Clarke, Baker, the entire property, for 675*l.*, subject to Anne Billing’s life-interest in the ‘Swan.’

Some years later, Anne Billing sold her life-interest to Clarke for 29*l.* 10*s.* per annum.

John Clarke was the first to take a right view of this property and its capabilities.

*A.D.* 1722.—He granted a building lease for sixty-one years, of the three acres, ground-rents 3*l.* per house.

His successor, Jonathan Clarke, followed suit, and, in

*A.D.* 1776, condemned the ‘Swan,’ and granted the materials, the site, and the pightle, on building lease, to Ralph Mills, for a much shorter time than is general nowadays, on condition of his building eighteen houses, one of which to be the Freeholder’s, rent free, and Mills paying 59*l.* a year for the other seventeen.

Now in the will of Edward Billing, already referred to, and dated 1701, the ‘Swan’ and its

messuages, and its pightle, are described as 'lying near *the bridge*, and bounded west by Sir Hugh Vaughan's lands, east by the Lazar-cot, north by the wall of Hyde Park, and south by the King's Highway.' I should have called it the Queen's Highway; but you must be born before you can be consulted in trifles. From this document, coupled with the building lease of 1776, we can trace the property to a square foot; the back slum now leading to four houses called 'High Row,' together with those houses, covers the area of the old 'Swan Inn.' The houses lately called 'Albert Terrace,' and numbered correctly, but now called 'Albert Gate,' and numbered prophetically, are, with their little gardens, the pightle.

The 'Swan Inn,' condemned in 1776, was demolished in 1778, not 88, as the guide-books say, and the houses rose. The ground-leases were not a bad bargain for the builder, since in 1791 I find his tenants paid him 539*l.* a year: but it was an excellent one for the Freeholder's family—the ground-leases expired, and the last Clarke enjoyed both land and houses gratis. The three acres of meadow had got into Chancery, and were dispersed among little Clarkes and devoured by lawyers.

A.D. 1830.—The last Clarke died, and left 'High Row' and the back slum, erst the 'Swan

Inn,' and the eighteen houses built on the pightle—in two undivided moieties—to a Mr. Franklin, and to his own housekeeper, Anne Byford. Mrs. Byford was a worthy, prudent woman, from the county Durham, who had put by money, and kept it in an obsolete chimney *more mulierum*. But now, objecting, like most of us, to an undivided moiety, she swept her cold chimney, and with the help of her solicitor and trusty friend Mr. Charles Hird, she borrowed the needful, and bought Franklin out, and became sole proprietor.

The affair was not rosy at first: the leases were unexpired, the rents low, the footway unpaved. She has told me herself—for we were, for years, on very friendly terms—that she had to trudge through the slush and dirt to apply for her quarterly rents, and often went home crying at the hostile reception or excuses she met, instead of her modest dues. But she held on; she could see the site was admirable; no other houses of this description had gardens running to Hyde Park. Intelligence was flowing westward. Men of substance began to take up every lease at a higher rent, and to lay out thousands of pounds in improvements.

Between 1860 and 1865 ambitious speculators sought noble sites, especially for vast hotels; and one fine day the agent for an enterprising com-

pany walked into the office of Mrs. Byford's solicitor, Mr. Charles Hird, Portland Chambers, Titchfield Street, and offered five hundred thousand pounds for 'High Row' and 'Albert Terrace,' with its gardens.

In this offer the houses counted as *débris*: it was an offer for the site of the 'Swan' and pighble, which between 1616, the year of Shakespeare's decease, and the date of this munificent offer, had been so leased, and re-leased, and sold, and bandied to and fro, generation after generation, for an old song.

At the date of the above proposal Mrs. Byford's income from this historical property could not have exceeded 2,500*l.* and the bid was 20,000*l.* per annum. But a profane Yorkshireman once said to me for my instruction, 'Women are kittle cattle to drive'; and so it proved in this case. The property was sacred in that brave woman's heart. It had made her often sorrowful, often glad and hopeful. She had watched it grow, and looked to see it grow more and more. It was her child: and she declined half a million of money for it.

A few years more, and a new customer stepped upon the scene—*Cupidity*.

A first-class builder had his eye upon Albert Terrace and its pretty little gardens running to

Hyde Park. Said he to himself: 'If I could but get hold of these, how I would *improve* them! I'd pull down these irregular houses, cut up the gardens, and rear "noble mansions" to command Hyde Park, and be occupied by rank and fashion, not by a scum of artists, authors, physicians, merchants, and mere ladies and gentlemen, who pay their rent and tradesmen, but do not drive four-in-hand.'

A circumstance favoured this generous design; the Government of the day had been petitioned sore by afflicted householders, to remove the barracks from Knightsbridge to some place with fewer cooks and nurse maids to be corrupted and kitchens pillaged.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer loved economy and hated deficits: so this canny builder ear-wigged him. 'If you,' said he, 'will give us the present site of the condemned barracks, and compulsory sale of "Albert Terrace," under a private Bill, we will build you new barracks for nothing on any site you choose to give us. It will be *pro bono publico*.'

This, as presented *ex parte*, was a great temptation to a public economist; and the statesman inclined his ear to it.

The patriotic project leaked out and set the 'Terrace' in a flutter. After-wit is everybody's

wit ; but ours had been the forethought to see the value of the sweetest site in London long before aristocrats, and plutocrats, and schemers, and builders ; and were our mental inferiors to juggle us out of it on terms quite inadequate to us ?

We held meetings, passed resolutions, interested our powerful friends, and sent a deputation, dotted with M.P.s, to the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The deputation met with rather a chill reception, and at first buzzed, as deputations will, and took weak ground, and got laid on their backs more than once : but when they urged that the scheme had not occurred to the Government, but had been suggested by a trader—cloaking lucre with public spirit—and named the person, the statesman lost his temper, and they gained their cause. He rose like a tower, and disposed of them in one of those curt sentences that are often uttered by big men, seldom by little deputations. ‘Enough, gentlemen ; you have said all you *can*, and much more than you need have said, or ought to have said, to *me* ; you keep yours, and we’ll keep ours.’

Then he turned his back on them, and that was rude, and has all my sympathy ; for is there a more galling, disgusting, unnatural, intolerable thing than to be forced by our own bosom traitors

—our justice, our probity, our honour, and our conscience—to hear reason against ourselves?

The deputation went one way, and baffled cupidity another, lamenting the scarcity of patriotism, and the sacrifice of 100,000*l.* to such bugbears as Meum and Tuum, and respect for the rights of the weak.

Peace blessed the little Terrace for three or four years, and then

The mouthing patriot with an itching palm,

rendered foxier by defeat, attacked the historical site with admirable craft and plausibility, and a new ally, seldom defeated in this country — Flunkeyism.

The first act of the new comedy was played by architects and surveyors. They called on us, and showed us their plans for building ‘noble mansions’ eleven stories high, on the site of our houses and gardens, and hinted at a fair remuneration if we would consent and make way for our superiors. See Ahab’s first proposal to Naboth.

We declined, and the second act commenced. The architects, surveyors, and agents vanished entirely, and the leading actor appeared, with his drawn sword, a private Bill. He was a patriot peer, whose estates were in Yorkshire; from that far country came this benevolent being to confer a

disinterested boon on the little village of Knightsbridge.

The Bill was entitled

‘*Albert Terrace, Knightsbridge, Improvement Act.*’

It is a masterpiece in its way, and very instructive as a warning to all public men to look keenly and distrustfully below the surface of every private Bill.

The *Preamble* stated that the new road, hereinafter described, from the high-road Knightsbridge into Hyde Park, would be of great public and local advantage.

That the Right Honourable Henry Stapleton, Baron Beaumont (hereinafter called the undertaker), was willing to construct the said new road, at his own expense, if authorised to acquire certain lands, buildings, and property for that purpose.

And that this could not be effected without the consent of Parliament.

The *Bill*, amidst a number of colourless clauses, slyly inserted that the undertaker of this road (which ought clearly to have been a continuation of Sloane Street straight as a bee-line) might deviate, not eastward into his own property and justice, but westward, like a ram’s horn, into the bulk of Anne Byford’s houses.

And instead of asking for the unconstitutional



power of compulsory purchase, clause 10 proposed that the power of compulsory purchase should *not* be exercised after three years from the passing of this Act.

The abuse might be forced on them. Their only anxiety was to guard against the abuse of the abuse.

Briefly, a cannier, more innocent-looking, yet subtle and treacherous composition, never emanated from a Machiavelian pen.

It offered something to every class of society : a new public road into the Park, good for the people and the aristocracy ; a few private houses that stood in the way, or nearly in the way, of the public road, to be turned into noble mansions, good for the plutocracy and the shop-keepers ; and the projector a Peer, good for the national flunkeyism.

For the first time I was seriously alarmed, and prepared to fight ; for what says Sydney Smith, the wisest as well as wittiest man of his day ? ‘ Equal rights to unequal possessions, that is what Englishmen will come out and fight for.’

I fired my first shot ; wrote on my front wall, in huge letters,

### NABOTH'S VINEYARD.

The discharge produced a limited effect. I

had assumed too hastily that all the world was familiar with that ancient history of personal cupidity and spoliation *pro bono publico*, and would apply it to the modern situation, with which it had two leading features in common. The deportment of my neighbours surprised me. They stopped, read, scratched their heads, and went away bewildered. I observed their dumb play, and sent my people to catch their comments, if any. Alas! these made it very clear that Knightsbridge thumbs not the archives of Samaria.

One old Clo' smiled supercilious, and we always suspected him of applying my text; but it was only suspicion, and counterbalanced by native *naïveté*; a little tradesman was bustling eastward to make money, saw the inscription, stopped a moment, and said to his companion, 'Nabob's vinegar! Why, it looks like a gentleman's house.'

However, as a Sphinx's riddle, set, by a popular maniac, on a wall, it roused a little of that mysterious interest which still waits upon the unknown, and awakened vague expectation.

Then I prepared my petition to the House, and took grave objection to the Bill, with an obsequious sobriety as fictitious as the patriotism of the Bill.

But I consoled myself for this unnatural restraint by preparing a little Parliamentary Bill of my own, papered and printed and indorsed in exact imitation of the other Bill, only worded on the reverse principle of calling things by their right names. The Bill was entitled, 'Knightsbridge Spoliation Act,' and described as follows :

#### A BILL.

For other purposes, under the pretext of a new private carriage drive into the Park, to be called a public road.

#### *The Preamble.*

Whereas the sites of certain houses and gardens, called Albert Terrace, Knightsbridge, are known to be of great value to building speculators, and attempts to appropriate them have been made from time to time, but have failed for want of the proper varnish ; and whereas the owners of the said sites are merchants, physicians, authors, and commoners, and to transfer their property by force to a speculating lord and his builders would be a great advantage to the said speculators, and also of great local advantage—to an estate in Yorkshire.

And whereas the trades-people who conceived this Bill are builders, architects, and agents, and their names might lack lustre, and even rouse suspicion, a nobleman, hereinafter described as the 'Patriot Peer,' will represent the shop, and is willing to relieve the rightful owners of the sites afore-named, by compulsory purchase, and to build flats one hundred feet high, and let them to flats at 50*l.* a room, and gain 200,000*l.* clear profit, provided he may construct a new drive into the Park at the cost to himself of 80*l.*, or thereabouts, and bear ever after the style and title of 'the Patriot Peer.'

And since great men no longer despoil their neighbours in the name of God, as in the days of King Ahab and Mr. Cromwell, but in the name of the public, it is expedient to dedicate this new carriage drive to the public ; the said drive not to traverse the

Park, and no cab, cart, or other vehicle such as the public uses, will be allowed to travel on it.

The new drive and the foot-paths together shall be only forty-four feet wide, but whether the foot-paths shall be ten feet, twenty, or thirty, is to be left to the discretion of the private Lawgiver.

As this carriage drive of unlimited narrowness is to be used only by the narrowest class in the kingdom, it shall be dedicated to all classes, and this phraseology shall be often repeated, since reiteration passes with many for truth. The drive, during construction, to be called 'Patriot's Road,' and when finished, 'Oligarch Alley,' or 'Plutocrat Lane.'

And so on, with perfect justice, but a bitterness not worth reviving.

Then for once I deviated from my habits, and appealed in person to leading men in both Houses, who are accessible to me, though I never intrude on them.

Finding me so busy, some friends of the measure, out of good nature, advised me not to waste my valuable time, and proved to me that it was no use. Albert Terrace was an eye-sore long recognised; all the trades-people in the district and three hundred ladies and gentlemen of distinction—dukes, earls, marquises, countesses, viscountesses, and ladies—had promised to support the Bill with their signatures to a petition.

Flunkeyism is mighty in this island. I knew, I trembled, I persisted.

I sounded the nearest Tory member. He would not go into the merits, but said there was

a serious objection to the Bill as it stood. It would interfere with the Queen's wall.

Unfortunately this was a detail the projectors could alter, and yet trample on such comparative trifles as the law of England and the great rights of little people.

Next I called upon a Liberal—my neighbour Sir Henry James. I had a slight acquaintance with him through his beating me often at whist, and always at repartee, in a certain club. I now took a mean revenge by begging him to read my papers.

He looked aghast, and hoped they were not long.

‘Not so long as your *briefs*,’ said I, sourly.

Then this master of fence looked away, and muttered, as if in soliloquy, ‘I’m *paid* for reading *that* rubbish.’ He added, with a sigh, ‘There! leave them with me.’

The very next morning he invited me to call on him, and I found him completely master of the subject and every detail.

He summed up by saying kindly, ‘Really I don’t wonder at your being indignant, for it is a purely private speculation, and the road is a blind. I think you can defeat it in committee; but that would cost you a good deal of money.’

I asked him if it could not be stopped on the road to committee.

He said that was always difficult with private Bills. 'However,' said he, 'if the persons interested are disposed to confide the matter to me, I will see if I can do anything in so clear a case.'

You may guess whether I jumped at this or not.

As a proof how these private Bills are smuggled through Parliament, it turned out that the Bill in question had already been read once, and none of us knew it, and the second reading was coming on in a few days.

Sir Henry James lost no time either. He rose in the House and asked the member for Chelsea whether he was aware of a bill called 'Knightsbridge Improvement Acts,' and had the Government looked into it.

The honourable member replied that they had, and he would go so far as to say did not approve it.

'Shall you oppose it?' asked Sir Henry James. And as the other did not reply, 'Because, if not, we shall.' He then gave notice that before this Bill was allowed to go into committee he wished to put certain questions to the promoters, and named next Thursday.

Then I lent my humble co-operation by a letter to the 'Daily Telegraph,' entitled 'Private Bills and Public Wrongs.'

One unfair advantage of private Bills is that their opponents can't get one-tenth part of the House of Commons to be there and discuss them ; so this letter of mine was intended as a whip to secure a House at that early hour, when there never is a House, but only a handful, chiefly partisans of the oppressive measure. It had an effect ; there were a good many independent members present when Sir Henry James rose to question the promoters of the Knightsbridge Improvement Bill.

He was met in a way that contrasted curiously with the advice I had received—not to run my head against a stone wall, with three hundred noble signatures written on it. A member instructed by the promoters popped up and anticipated all Sir James's questions, with one prudent reply, *The Bill is withdrawn.*

Thus fell, by the mere wind of a good lawyer's sword, that impregnable edifice of patriotic spoliation ; and Anne Byford, who in this business represented the virtues of the nation, the self-denial and economy which purchase from a willing vender, with Abraham for a precedent, Moses for a guide, and the law of England for a title, and the fortitude which retains, in hard times, till value increases, and cupidity burns to reap where it never sowed, was not juggled out of her child for

one-tenth part of the sum she had refused from a straightforward bidder.

So much for the past history of the 'Swan' and pightle. There is more to come, and soon. The projectors of the defeated bill had made large purchases of land close by Albert Terrace, and this was thrown upon their hands at a heavy loss for years. But now I am happy to say they have sold it to the Earl of Rosebery for 120,000*l.*, so says report.

Even if they have, what has been will be; in fifty years' time this transaction will be called buying the best site in London for an old song.

Meantime, siege and blockade having failed, a mine is due by all the laws of war. So a new Metropolitan Company proposes this very year to run under the unfortunate terrace, propel the trains with a patent that, like all recent patents, will often be out of order, and stop them with another patent that will seldom be *in* order. Item, to stifle and smash the public a good deal more than they are smashed and stifled at present (which seems superfluous); the motive, public spirit, as before; the instrument, a private bill—*Anathema sit in sæcula sæculorum*.

While the moles are at work below, Lord Rosebery will rear 'a noble mansion;' by that



expression every builder and every snob in London means a pile of stucco, huge and hideous.

Then flunkeyism will say, 'Are a Peer and his palace to be shouldered by cribs?' and cupidity will demand a line of 'noble mansions,' and no garden, in place of Albert Terrace and its pretty gardens—a *rus in urbe* a thousand times more beautiful and a hundred thousand times more rare, whatever idiots, snobs, builders, and beasts may think, than monotonous piles of stucco—and that engine of worse than Oriental despotism, the private Bill, will be ready to hand. The rest is in the womb of time.

But my pages are devoted to the past, not to the doubtful future. What I have related is the documentary, pecuniary, political, and private history of the 'Swan' and pighble. Now many places have a long prosaic history, and a short romantic one. The chronic history of Waterloo field is to be ploughed, and sowed, and reaped, and mowed: yet once in a way these acts of husbandry were diversified with a great battle, where hosts decided the fate of Empires. After that, agriculture resumed its sullen sway, and even heroes submitted, and fattened the field their valour had glorified.

Second-rate horses compete, every year, on Egham turf, and will while the turf endures. But

one day the competing horses on that sward were a King and his Barons, and they contended over the constitution, and the Cup was Magna Charta. This double history belongs to small places as well as great, to Culloden and Agincourt, and to the narrow steps leading from Berkeley Street to Curzon Street, Mayfair, down which, with head lowered to his saddle bow, the desperate Turpin spurred his horse, with the Bow Street runners on each side ; but no man ever did it before, nor will again.

Even so, amidst all these prosaic pamphlets . and papers, leases and releases, mortgages, conveyances, and testaments, ignoring so calmly every incident not bearing on title, there happened within the area of the 'Swan' and its pightle a romantic story, which I hope will reward my friends who have waded through my prose ; for, besides some minor attractions, it is a tale of Blood.

## *THE KNIGHTSBRIDGE MYSTERY.*

### CHAPTER I.

IN Charles the Second's day the 'Swan' was denounced by the dramatists as a house where unfaithful wives and mistresses met their gallants.

But in the next century, when John Clarke was the Freeholder, no special imputation of that sort rested on it: it was a country inn with large stables, horsed the Brentford coach, and entertained man and beast on journeys long or short. It had also permanent visitors, especially in summer; for it was near London, and yet a rural retreat; meadows on each side, Hyde Park at back, Knightsbridge Green in front.

Amongst the permanent lodgers was Mr. Gardiner, a substantial man; and Captain Cowen, a retired officer of moderate means, had lately taken two rooms for himself and his son. Mr. Gardiner often joined the company in the public room, but the Cowens kept to themselves upstairs.

This was soon noticed and resented, in that

age of few books and free converse. Some said, 'Oh, we are not good enough for him!' others inquired what a half-pay Captain had to give himself airs about. Candour interposed and supplied the climax: 'Nay, my masters, the Captain may be in hiding from duns, or from the runners: now I think on't, the York mail was robbed scarce a se'nnight before his Worship came a-hiding here.'

But the landlady's tongue ran the other way. Her weight was sixteen stone, her sentiments were her interests, and her tongue her tomahawk. 'Tis pity,' said she, one day, 'some folk can't keep their tongues from blackening of their betters. The Captain is a civil-spoken gentleman—Lord send there were more of them in these parts!—as takes his hat off to me whenever he meets me, and pays his reckoning weekly. If he has a mind to be private, what business is that of yours, or yours? But curs must bark at their betters.'

Detraction, thus roughly quelled for certain seconds, revived at intervals whenever Dame Cust's broad back was turned. It was mildly encountered one evening by Gardiner. 'Nay, good sirs,' said he, 'you mistake the worthy Captain. To have fought at Blenheim and Malplaquet, no man hath less vanity. 'Tis for his son

he holds aloof. He guards the youth like a mother, and will not have him to hear our tap-room jests. He worships the boy—a sullen lout, sirs; but paternal love is blind. He told me once he had loved his wife dearly, and lost her young, and this was all he had of her. “And,” said he, “I’d spill blood like water for him, my own the first.” “Then, sir,” says I, “I fear he will give you a sore heart, one day.” “And welcome,” says my Captain, and his face like iron.’

Somebody remarked that no man keeps out of company who is good company; but Mr. Gardiner parried that dogma. ‘When young master is abed, my neighbour does sometimes invite me to share a bottle; and a sprightlier companion I would not desire. Such stories of battles, and duels, and love intrigues!’

‘Now there’s an old fox for you,’ said one, approvingly. It reconciled him to the Captain’s decency to find that it was only hypocrisy.

‘I like not—a man—who wears—a mask,’ hiccoughed a hitherto silent personage, revealing his clandestine drunkenness and unsuspected wisdom at one blow.

These various theories were still fermenting in the bosom of the ‘Swan,’ when one day there rode up to the door a gorgeous officer, hot from

the minister's levée, in scarlet and gold, with an order like a star-fish glittering on his breast. His servant, a private soldier, rode behind him, and, slipping hastily from his saddle, held his master's horse while he dismounted. Just then Captain Cowen came out for his afternoon walk. He started, and cried out, 'Colonel Barrington!'

'Ay, brother,' cried the other, and instantly the two officers embraced, and even kissed each other, for that feminine custom had not yet retired across the Channel; and these were soldiers who had fought and bled side by side, and nursed each other in turn; and your true soldier does not nurse by halves; his vigilance and tenderness are an example to women, and he rustleth not.

Captain Cowen invited Colonel Barrington to his room, and that warrior marched down the passage after him, single file, with long brass spurs and sabre clinking at his heels; and the establishment ducked and smiled, and respected Captain Cowen for the reason we admire the moon.

Seated in Cowen's room, the new-comer said, heartily: 'Well, Ned, I come not empty-handed. Here is thy pension at last;' and handed him a parchment with a seal like a poached egg.

Cowen changed colour, and thanked him with an emotion he rarely betrayed, and gloated over

the precious document. His cast-iron features relaxed, and he said : 'It comes in the nick of time, for now I can send my dear Jack to college.'

This led somehow to an exposure of his affairs. He had just 110*l.* a year, derived from the sale of his commission, which he had invested, at fifteen per cent., with a well-known mercantile house in the City. 'So now,' said he, 'I shall divide it all in three ; Jack will want two parts to live at Oxford, and I can do well enough here on one.' The rest of the conversation does not matter, so I dismiss it and Colonel Barrington for the time. A few days afterward Jack went to college, and Captain Cowen reduced his expenses, and dined at the shilling ordinary, and indeed took all his moderate repasts in public.

Instead of the severe and reserved character he had worn while his son was with him, he now shone out a boon companion, and sometimes kept the table in a roar with his marvellous mimicries of all the characters, male or female, that lived in the inn or frequented it, and sometimes held them breathless with adventures, dangers, intrigues, in which a leading part had been played by himself or his friends.

He became quite a popular character, except with one or two envious bodies, whom he eclipsed ;

they revenged themselves by saying it was all braggadocio : his battles had been fought over a bottle, and by the fireside.

The district east and west of Knightsbridge had long been infested with foot-pads ; they robbed passengers in the country lanes, which then abounded, and sometimes on the King's highway, from which those lanes offered an easy escape.

One moonlight night Captain Cowen was returning home alone from an entertainment at Fulham, when suddenly the air seemed to fill with a woman's screams and cries. They issued from a lane on his right hand. He whipped out his sword and dashed down the lane. It took a sudden turn, and in a moment he came upon three foot-pads, robbing and maltreating an old gentleman and his wife. The old man's sword lay at a distance, struck from his feeble hand ; the woman's tongue proved the better weapon, for at least it brought an ally.

The nearest robber, seeing the Captain come at him with his drawn sword glittering in the moonshine, fired hastily, and grazed his cheek, and was skewered like a frog the next moment ; his cry of agony mingled with two shouts of dismay, and the other foot-pads fled ; but, even as they turned, Captain Cowen's nimble blade entered



the shoulder of one, and pierced the fleshy part. He escaped, however, but howling and bleeding.

Captain Cowen handed over the lady and gentleman to the people who flocked to the place, now the work was done, and the disabled robber to the guardians of the public peace, who arrived last of all. He himself withdrew apart and wiped his sword very carefully and minutely with a white pocket-handkerchief, and then retired.

He was so far from parading his exploit that he went round by the park and let himself into the 'Swan' with his private key, and was going quietly to bed, when the chambermaid met him, and up flew her arms, with cries of dismay. 'Oh, Captain! Captain! Look at you—smothered in blood! I shall faint.'

'Tush! Silly wench!' said Captain Cowen. 'I am not hurt.'

'Not hurt, sir? And bleeding like a pig! Your cheek—your poor cheek!'

Captain Cowen put up his hand, and found that blood was really welling from his cheek and ear.

He looked grave for a moment, then assured her it was but a scratch, and offered to convince her of that. 'Bring me some luke-warm water, and thou shalt be my doctor. But, Barbara, prithee publish it not.'

Next morning an officer of justice inquired

after him at the 'Swan,' and demanded his attendance at Bow Street, at two that afternoon, to give evidence against the foot-pads. This was the very thing he wished to avoid ; but there was no evading the summons.

The officer was invited into the bar by the landlady, and sang the gallant Captain's exploit, with his own variations. The inn began to ring with Cowen's praises. Indeed, there was now but one detractor left—the hostler, Daniel Cox, a drunken fellow of sinister aspect, who had for some time stared and lowered at Captain Cowen, and muttered mysterious things, doubts as to his being a real Captain, etc. etc. Which incoherent murmurs of a muddle-headed drunkard were not treated as oracular by any human creature, though the stable-boy once went so far as to say, ' I sometimes almost thinks as how our Dan do know summut ; only he don't rightly know what 'tis, along o' being always muddled in liquor.'

Cowen, who seemed to notice little, but noticed everything, had observed the lowering looks of this fellow, and felt he had an enemy : it even made him a little uneasy, though he was too proud and self-possessed to show it.

With this exception, then, everybody greeted him with hearty compliments, and he was cheered out of the inn, marching to Bow Street.

Daniel Cox, who—as accidents will happen—was sober that morning, saw him out, and then put on his own coat.

‘Take thou charge of the stable, Sam,’ said he.

‘Why, where be’st going, at this time o’ day?’

‘I be going to Bow Street,’ said Daniel, doggedly.

At Bow Street Captain Cowen was received with great respect, and a seat given him by the sitting magistrate while some minor cases were disposed of.

In due course the highway robbery was called and proved by the parties who, unluckily for the accused, had been actually robbed before Cowen interfered.

Then the oath was tendered to Cowen: he stood up by the magistrate’s side and deposed, with military brevity and exactness, to the facts I have related, but refused to swear to the identity of the individual culprit who stood pale and trembling at the dock.

The Attorney for the Crown, after pressing in vain, said, ‘Quite right, Captain Cowen; a witness cannot be too scrupulous.’

He then called an officer who had found the robber leaning against a railing fainting from loss

of blood, scarce a furlong from the scene of the robbery, and wounded in the shoulder. That let in Captain Cowen's evidence, and the culprit was committed for trial, and soon after peached upon his only comrade at large. The other lay in the hospital at Newgate.

The magistrate complimented Captain Cowen on his conduct and his evidence, and he went away universally admired. Yet he was not elated, nor indeed content. Sitting by the magistrate's side, after he had given his evidence, he happened to look all round the Court, and in a distant corner he saw the enormous mottled nose and sinister eyes of Daniel Cox glaring at him with a strange but puzzled expression.

Cowen had learned to read faces, and he said to himself: 'What is there in that ruffian's mind about me? Did he know me years ago? I cannot remember him. Curse the beast—one would almost—think—he is cudgelling his drunken memory. I'll keep an eye on *you*.'

He went home thoughtful and discomposed, because this drunkard glowered at him so. The reception he met with at the 'Swan' effaced the impression. He was received with acclamations, and now that publicity was forced on him, he accepted it, and revelled in popularity.

About this time he received a letter from his

son, inclosing a notice from the college tutor, speaking highly of his ability, good conduct, devotion to study.

This made the father swell with loving pride.

Jack hinted modestly that there were unavoidable expenses and his funds were dwindling. He enclosed an account that showed how the money went.

The father wrote back and bade him be easy ; he should have every farthing required, and speedily. ‘For,’ said he, ‘my half-year’s interest is due now.’

Two days after he had a letter from his man of business begging him to call. He went with alacrity, making sure his money was waiting for him as usual.

His lawyer received him very gravely, and begged him to be seated. He then broke to him some appalling news. The great house of Brown, Molyneux and Co. had suspended payments at noon the day before, and were not expected to pay a shilling in the pound. Captain Cowen’s little fortune was gone—all but his pension of 80*l.* a year.

He sat like a man turned to stone ; then he clasped his hands with agony, and uttered two words—no more—‘My son !’

He rose and left the place like one in a dream.

He got down to Knightsbridge, he hardly knew how. At the very door of the inn he fell down in a fit. The people of the inn were round him in a moment, and restoratives freely supplied. His sturdy nature soon revived ; but, with the moral and physical shock, his lips were slightly distorted over his clenched teeth. His face, too, was ashy pale.

When he came to himself, the first face he noticed was that of Daniel Cox, eyeing him, not with pity, but with puzzled curiosity. Cowen shuddered and closed his own eyes to avoid this blighting glare. Then, without opening them, he muttered : ‘ What has befallen me ? I feel no wound.’

‘ Laws forbid, sir ! ’ said the landlady, leaning over him. ‘ Your honour did but swoon for once, to show you was born of a woman, and not made of naught but steel. Here, you gaping loons and sluts, help the Captain to his room amongst ye, and then go about your business.’

This order was promptly executed, so far as assisting Captain Cowen to rise ; but he was no sooner on his feet than he waved them all from him haughtily and said : ‘ Let me be. It is the mind—it is the mind ; ’ and he smote his forehead in despair, for now it all came back on him.

Then he rushed into the inn and locked himself into his room. Female curiosity buzzed about the doors, but was not admitted until he had recovered his fortitude, and formed a bitter resolution to defend himself and his son against all mankind.

At last there came a timid tap, and a mellow voice said : ‘It is only me, Captain. Prithee let me in.’

He opened to her, and there was Barbara with a large tray and a snow-white cloth. She spread a table deftly, and uncovered a roast capon, and uncorked a bottle of white port, talking all the time. ‘The mistress says you must eat a bit, and drink this good wine, for her sake. Indeed, sir, ’twill do you good after your swoon.’ With many such encouraging words she got him to sit down and eat, and then filled his glass and put it to his lips. He could not eat much, but he drank the white port—a wine much prized, and purer than the purple vintage of our day.

At last came Barbara’s post-dict. ‘But alack ! to think of your fainting dead away ! Oh, Captain, what is the trouble ?’

The tear was in Barbara’s eye, though she was the emissary of Dame Cust’s curiosity, and all curiosity herself.

Captain Cowen, who had been expecting this

question for some time, replied, doggedly: 'I have lost the best friend I had in the world.'

'Dear heart!' said Barbara, and a big tear of sympathy, that had been gathering ever since she entered the room, rolled down her cheeks.

She put up a corner of her apron to her eyes. 'Alas, poor soul!' said she. 'Ay, I do know how hard it is to love and lose; but bethink you, sir, 'tis the lot of man. Our own turn must come. And you have your son left to thank God for, and a warm friend or two in this place, thof they be but humble.'

'Ay, good wench,' said the soldier, his iron nature touched for a moment by her goodness and simplicity, 'and none I value more than thee. But leave me awhile.'

The young woman's honest cheeks reddened at the praise of such a man. 'Your will's my pleasure, sir,' said she, and retired, leaving the capon and the wine.

Any little compunction he might have at refusing his confidence to this humble friend did not trouble him long. He looked on women as leaky vessels; and he had firmly resolved not to make his situation worse by telling the base world that he was poor. Many a hard rub had put a fine point on this man of steel.

He glozed the matter, too, in his own mind.



‘I told her no lie. I *have* lost my best friend, for I’ve lost my money.’

From that day Captain Cowen visited the tap-room no more, and indeed seldom went out by daylight. He was all alone now, for Mr. Gardiner was gone to Wiltshire to collect his rents. In his solitary chamber Cowen ruminated his loss and the villany of mankind, and his busy brain resolved scheme after scheme to repair the impending ruin of his son’s prospects. It was there the iron entered his soul. The example of the very foot-pads he had baffled occurred to him in his more desperate moments, but he fought the temptation down : and in due course one of them was transported, and one hung ; the other languished in Newgate.

By-and-by he began to be mysteriously busy, and the door always locked. No clue was ever found to his labours but bits of melted wax in the fender and a tuft or two of grey hair, and it was never discovered in Knightsbridge that he often begged in the City at dusk, in a disguise so perfect that a frequenter of the ‘Swan’ once gave him a groat. Thus did he levy his tax upon the stony place that had undone him.

Instead of taking his afternoon walk as heretofore, he would sit disconsolate on the seat of a

staircase window that looked into the yard, and so take the air and sun : and it was owing to this new habit he overheard, one day, a dialogue, in which the foggy voice of the hostler predominated at first. He was running down Captain Cowen to a pot-boy. The pot-boy stood up for him. That annoyed Cox. He spoke louder and louder the more he was opposed, till at last he bawled out : ‘I tell ye I’ve seen him a-sitting by the judge, and I’ve seen him in the dock.’

At these words Captain Cowen recoiled, though he was already out of sight, and his eye glittered like a basilisk’s.

But immediately a new voice broke upon the scene, a woman’s. ‘Thou foul-mouthed knave. Is it for thee to slander men of worship, and give the inn a bad name? Remember I have but to lift my finger to hang thee, so drive me not to’t. Begone to thy horses this moment ; thou art not fit to be among Christians. Begone, I say, or it shall be the worse for thee ;’ and she drove him across the yard, and followed him up with a current of invectives eloquent even at a distance, though the words were no longer distinct : and who should this be but the house-maid, Barbara Lamb, so gentle, mellow, and melodious before the gentlefolk, and especially her hero, Captain Cowen !

As for Daniel Cox, he cowered, writhed, and wriggled away before her, and slipped into the stable.

Captain Cowen was now soured by trouble, and this persistent enmity of that fellow roused at last a fixed and deadly hatred in his mind, all the more intense that fear mingled with it.

He sounded Barbara; asked her what nonsense that ruffian had been talking, and what he had done that she could hang him for. But Barbara would not say a malicious word against a fellow-servant in cold blood. 'I can keep a secret,' said she. 'If he keeps his tongue off you, I'll keep mine.'

'So be it,' said Cowen. 'Then I warn you I am sick of his insolence; and drunkards must be taught not to make enemies of sober men nor fools of wise men.' He said this so bitterly that, to soothe him, she begged him not to trouble about the ravings of a sot. 'Dear heart,' said she, 'nobody heeds Dan Cox.'

Some days afterward she told him that Dan had been drinking harder than ever, and wouldn't trouble honest folk long, for he had the delusions that go before a drunkard's end; why, he had told the stable-boy he had seen a vision of himself climb over the garden wall, and enter the house by the back door. 'The poor wretch says he

knew himself by his *bottle nose* and his cow-skin waistcoat ; and, to be sure, there is no such nose in the parish—thank Heaven for 't!—and not many such waistcoats.' She laughed heartily, but Cowen's lip curled in a venomous sneer. He said : ' More likely 'twas the knave himself. Look to your spoons, if such a face as that walks by night.' Barbara turned grave directly ; he eyed her askant, and saw the random shot had gone home.

Captain Cowen now often slept in the City, alleging business.

Mr. Gardiner wrote from Salisbury, ordering his room to be ready and his sheets well aired.

One afternoon he returned with a bag and a small valise, prodigiously heavy. He had a fire lighted, though it was a fine autumn, for he was chilled with his journey, and invited Captain Cowen to sup with him. The latter consented, but begged it might be an early supper, as he must sleep in the City.

' I am sorry for that,' said Gardiner. ' I have a hundred and eighty guineas there in that bag, and a man could get into my room from yours.'

' Not if you lock the middle door,' said Cowen. ' But I can leave you the key of my outer door, for that matter.'

This offer was accepted ; but still Mr. Gardiner

felt uneasy. There had been several robberies at inns, and it was a rainy, gusty night. He was depressed and ill at ease. Then Captain Cowen offered him his pistols, and helped him load them—two bullets in each. He also went and fetched him a bottle of the best port, and after drinking one glass with him, hurried away, and left his key with him for further security.

Mr. Gardiner, left to himself, made up a great fire and drank a glass or two of the wine; it seemed remarkably heady, and raised his spirits. After all, it was only for one night; to-morrow he would deposit his gold in the bank. He began to unpack his things and put his night-dress to the fire; but by-and-by he felt so drowsy that he did but take his coat off, put his pistols under the pillow, and lay down on the bed and fell fast asleep.

That night Barbara Lamb awoke twice, thinking each time she heard doors open and shut on the floor below her.

But it was a gusty night, and she concluded it was most likely the wind. Still a residue of uneasiness made her rise at five instead of six, and she lighted her tinder and came down with a rush-light. She found Captain Cowen's door wide open; it had been locked when she went to bed. That alarmed her greatly. She looked in. A

glance was enough. She cried, 'Thieves! thieves!' and in a moment uttered scream upon scream.

In an incredibly short time pale and eager faces of men and women filled the passage.

Cowen's room, being open, was entered first. On the floor lay what Barbara had seen at a glance—his portmanteau rifled and the clothes scattered about. The door of communication was ajar; they opened it, and an appalling sight met their eyes: Mr. Gardiner was lying in a pool of blood and moaning feebly. There was little hope of saving him; no human body could long survive such a loss of the vital fluid. But it so happened there was a country surgeon in the house. He staunched the wounds—there were three—and somebody or other had the sense to beg the victim to make a statement. He was unable at first; but, under powerful stimulants, revived at last, and showed a strong wish to aid justice in avenging him. By this time they had got a magistrate to attend, and he put his ear to the dying man's lips; but others heard, so hushed was the room and so keen the awe and curiosity of each panting heart.

'I had gold in my portmanteau, and was afraid. I drank a bottle of wine with Captain Cowen, and he left me. He lent me his key and his pistols. I locked both doors. I felt very sleepy, and lay

down. When I woke, a man was leaning over my portmanteau. His back was toward me. I took a pistol, and aimed steadily. It missed fire. The man turned and sprang on me. I had caught up a knife, one we had for supper. I stabbed him with all my force. He wrested it from me, and I felt piercing blows. I am slain. Ay, I am slain.'

'But the man, sir. Did you not see his face at all?'

'Not till he fell on me. But then, very plainly. The moon shone.'

'Pray describe him.'

'Broken hat.'

'Yes.'

'Hairy waistcoat.'

'Yes.'

'Enormous nose.'

'Do you know him?'

'Ay. The hostler, Cox.'

There was a groan of horror and a cry for vengeance.

'Silence,' said the magistrate. 'Mr. Gardiner, you are a dying man. Words may kill. Be careful. Have you any doubts?'

'About what?'

'That the villain was Daniel Cox.'

'None whatever.'

At these words the men and women, who were glaring with pale faces and all their senses strained at the dying man and his faint yet terrible denunciation, broke into two bands; some remained rooted to the place, the rest hurried, with cries of vengeance, in search of Daniel Cox. They were met in the yard by two constables, and rushed first to the stables, not that they hoped to find him there. Of course he had absconded with his booty.

The stable door was ajar. They tore it open.

The gray dawn revealed Cox fast asleep on the straw in the first empty stall, and his bottle in the manger. His clothes were bloody, and the man was drunk. They pulled him, cursed him, struck him, and would have torn him in pieces, but the constables interfered, set him up against the rail, like timber, and searched his bosom, and found—a wound; then turned all his pockets inside out, amidst great expectation, and found—three half-pence and the key of the stable door.

## CHAPTER II.

THEY ransacked the straw, and all the premises, and found—nothing.

Then, to make him sober and get something out of him, they pumped upon his head till he



was very nearly choked. However, it told on him. He gasped for breath awhile, and rolled his eyes, and then coolly asked them had they found the villain.

They shook their fists at him. ‘Ay, we have found the villain, red-handed.’

‘I mean him as prowls about these parts in my waistcoat, and drove his knife into me last night—wonder a didn’t kill me out of hand. Have ye found *him* amongst ye?’

This question met with a volley of jeers and execrations, and the constables pinioned him, and bundled him off in a cart to Bow Street, to wait examination.

Meantime two Bow Street runners came down with a warrant, and made a careful examination of the premises. The two keys were on the table. Mr. Gardiner’s outer door was locked. There was no money either in his portmanteau or Captain Cowen’s. Both pistols were found loaded, but no priming in the pan of the one that lay on the bed; the other was primed, but the bullets were above the powder.

Bradbury, one of the runners, took particular notice of all.

Outside, blood was traced from the stable to the garden wall, and under this wall, in the grass a bloody knife was found belonging to the ‘Swan’

Inn. There was one knife less in Mr. Gardiner's room than had been carried up to his supper.

Mr. Gardiner lingered till noon, but never spoke again.

The news spread swiftly, and Captain Cowen came home in the afternoon, very pale and shocked.

He had heard of a robbery and murder at the 'Swan,' and came to know more. The landlady told him all that had transpired, and that the villain Cox was in prison.

Cowen listened thoughtfully, and said: 'Cox! No doubt he is a knave: but murder!—I should never have suspected him of that.'

The landlady pooh-poohed his doubts. 'Why, sir, the poor gentleman knew him, and wounded him in self-defence, and the rogue was found a-bleeding from that very wound, and my knife, as done the murder, not a stone's-throw from him as done it, which it was that Dan Cox, and he'll swing for't, please God.' Then, changing her tone, she said, solemnly, 'You'll come and see him, sir?'

'Yes,' said Cowen, resolutely, with scarce a moment's hesitation.

The landlady led the way, and took the keys out of her pocket and opened Cowen's door. 'We keep all locked,' said she, half apologetically:

‘the magistrate bade us ; and everything as we found it—God help us ! There—look at your portmanteau. I wish you may not have been robbed as well.’

‘No matter,’ said he.

‘But it matters to *me*,’ said she, ‘for the credit of the house.’ Then she gave him the key of the inner door, and waved her hand toward it, and sat down and began to cry.

Cowen went in and saw the appalling sight. He returned quickly, looking like a ghost, and muttered, ‘This is a terrible business.’

‘It is a bad business for me and all,’ said she. ‘He have robbed you too, I’ll go bail.’

Captain Cowen examined his trunk carefully. ‘Nothing to speak of,’ said he. ‘I’ve lost eight guineas and my gold watch.’

‘There !—there !—there !’ cried the landlady.

‘What does that matter, dame ? *He* has lost his life.’

‘Ay, poor soul. But ’twon’t bring him back, you being robbed and all. Was ever such an unfortunate woman ? Murder and robbery in *my* house ! Travellers will shun it like a pest-house. And the new landlord he only wanted a good excuse to take it down altogether.’

This was followed by more sobbing and crying.

Cowen took her down stairs into the bar, and comforted her. They had a glass of spirits together, and he encouraged the flow of her egotism, till at last she fully persuaded herself it was *her* calamity that one man was robbed and another murdered in *her* house.

Cowen, always a favourite, quite won her heart by falling into this view of the matter, and when he told her he must go back to the City again, for he had important business, and besides had no money left, either in his pockets or his rifled valise, she encouraged him to go, and said, kindly, indeed it was no place for him now ; it was very good of him to come back at all : but both apartments should be scoured and made decent in a very few days ; and a new carpet down in Mr. Gardiner's room.

So Cowen went back to the City, and left this notable woman to mop up *her* murder.

At Bow Street next morning, in answer to the evidence of his guilt, Cox told a tale which the magistrate said was even more ridiculous than most of the stories uneducated criminals get up on such occasions ; with this single comment he committed Cox for trial.

Everybody was of the magistrate's opinion, except a single Bow Street runner, the same who

had already examined the premises. This man suspected Cox, but had one qualm of doubt founded on the place where he had discovered the knife, and the circumstance of the blood being traced from that place to the stable, and not from the inn to the stable, and on a remark Cox had made to him in the cart. 'I don't belong to the house. I haan't got no keys to go in and out o' nights. And if I took a hatful of gold, I'd be off with it into another country—wouldn't *you*? Him as took the gentleman's money, he knew where 'twas, and he have got it: I didn't, and I haan't.'

Bradbury came down to the 'Swan,' and asked the landlady a question or two. She gave him short answers. He then told her that he wished to examine the wine that had come down from Mr. Gardiner's room.

The landlady looked him in the face, and said it had been drunk by the servants or thrown away long ago.

'I have my doubts of that,' said he.

'And welcome,' said she.

Then he wished to examine the keyholes.

'No,' said she; 'there has been prying enough into my house.'

Said he, angrily; 'You are obstructing justice. It is very suspicious.'

'It is you that is suspicious, and a mischief-

maker into the bargain,' said she. 'How do I know what you might put into my wine and my keyholes, and say you found it? You are well known, you Bow Street runners, for your hanky-panky tricks. Have *you* got a search-warrant, to throw more discredit upon my house? No? Then pack! and learn the law before you teach it me.'

Bradbury retired, bitterly indignant, and his indignation strengthened his faint doubt of Cox's guilt.

He set a friend to watch the 'Swan,' and he himself gave his mind to the whole case, and visited Cox in Newgate three times before his trial.

The next novelty was that legal assistance was provided for Cox by a person who expressed compassion for his poverty and inability to defend himself, guilty or not guilty; and that benevolent person was—Captain Cowen.

In due course Daniel Cox was arraigned at the bar of the Old Bailey for robbery and murder.

The deposition of the murdered man was put in by the Crown and the witnesses sworn who heard it, and Captain Cowen was called to support a portion of it. He swore that he supped with the deceased and loaded one pistol for him, while Mr. Gardiner loaded the other; lent him the key

of his own door for further security, and himself slept in the City.

The judge asked him where, and he said, '13 Farringdon Street.'

It was elicited from him that he had provided counsel for the prisoner.

His evidence was very short and to the point. It did not directly touch the accused, and the defendant's counsel—in spite of his client's eager desire—declined to cross-examine Captain Cowen. He thought a hostile examination of so respectable a witness, who brought nothing home to the accused, would only raise more indignation against his client.

The prosecution was strengthened by the reluctant evidence of Barbara Lamb. She deposed that three years ago Cox had been detected by her stealing money from a gentleman's table in the 'Swan' Inn, and she gave the details.

The judge asked her whether this was at night.

'No, my lord; at about four of the clock. He is never in the house at night; the mistress can't abide him.'

'Has he any key of the house?'

'Oh dear no, my lord.'

The rest of the evidence for the Crown is virtually before the reader.

For the defence it was proved that the man was found drunk, with no money nor keys upon him, and that the knife was found under the wall, and the blood was traceable from the wall to the stable. Bradbury, who proved this, tried to get in about the wine ; but this was stopped as irrelevant. ‘ There is only one person under suspicion,’ said the judge, rather sternly.

As counsel were not allowed in that day to make speeches to the jury, but only to examine and cross-examine and discuss points of law, Daniel Cox had to speak in his own defence.

‘ My lord,’ said he, ‘ it was my double done it.’

‘ Your what ?’ asked my lord, a little peevishly.

‘ My double. There’s a rogue prowls about the “ Swan ” at nights, which you couldn’t tell him from me. [*Laughter.*] You needn’t to laugh me to the gallows. I tell ye he have got a nose like mine.’ (*Laughter.*)

CLERK OF ARRAIGNS. Keep silence in the court, on pain of imprisonment.

‘ And he have got a waistcoat the very spit of mine, and a tumble-down hat such as I do wear. I saw him go by and let hisself into the “ Swan ” with a key, and I told Sam Pott next morning.’

JUDGE. Who is Sam Pott?



CULPRIT. Why, my stable-boy, to be sure.

JUDGE. Is he in court?

CULPRIT. I don't know. Ay, there he is.

JUDGE. Then you'd better call him.

CULPRIT (*shouting*). Hy! Sam!

SAM. Here be I. (*Loud laughter.*)

The judge explained, calmly, that to call a witness meant to put him in the box and swear him, and that although it was irregular, yet he should allow Pott to be sworn, if it would do the prisoner any good.

Prisoner's counsel said he had no wish to swear Mr. Pott.

'Well, Mr. Gurney,' said the judge, 'I don't think he can do you any harm.' Meaning in so desperate a case.

Thereupon Sam Pott was sworn, and deposed that Cox had told him about this double.

'When?'

'Often and often.'

'Before the murder?'

'Long afore that.'

COUNSEL FOR THE CROWN. Did you ever see this double?

'Not I.'

COUNSEL. I thought not.

Daniel Cox went on to say that on the night of the murder he was up with a sick horse, and he

saw his double let himself out of the inn the back way, and then turn round and close the door softly ; so he slipped out to meet him. But the double saw him, and made for the garden wall. He ran up and caught him with one leg over the wall, and seized a black bag he was carrying off ; the figure dropped it, and he heard a lot of money chink : that thereupon he cried ‘Thieves!’ and seized the man ; but immediately received a blow, and lost his senses for a time. When he came to, the man and the bag were both gone, and he felt so sick that he staggered to the stable and drank a pint of neat brandy, and he remembered no more till they pumped on him, and told him he had robbed and murdered a gentleman inside the ‘Swan’ Inn. ‘What they can’t tell me,’ said Daniel, beginning to shout, ‘is how I could know who has got money, and who haan’t, inside the “Swan” Inn. I keeps the stables, not the inn : and where be my keys to open and shut the “Swan” ? I never had none. And where’s the gentleman’s money ? ’Twas somebody in the inn as done it, for to have the money, and when you find the money, you’ll find the man.’

The prosecuting counsel ridiculed this defence, and *inter alia* asked the jury whether they thought it was a double the witness Lamb had caught robbing in the inn three years ago.

The judge summed up very closely, giving the evidence of every witness. What follows is a mere synopsis of his charge.

He showed it was beyond doubt that Mr. Gardiner returned to the inn with money, having collected his rents in Wiltshire; and this was known in the inn, and proved by several, and might have transpired in the yard or the tap-room. The unfortunate gentleman took Captain Cowen, a respectable person, his neighbour in the inn, into his confidence, and revealed his uneasiness. Captain Cowen swore that he supped with him, but could not stay all night, most unfortunately. But he encouraged him, left him his pistols, and helped him load them.

Then his lordship read the dying man's deposition.

The person thus solemnly denounced was found in the stable, bleeding from a recent wound, which seems to connect him at once with the deed as described by the dying man.

'But here,' said my lord, 'the chain is no longer perfect. A knife, taken from the "Swan," was found under the garden wall, and the first traces of blood commenced there, and continued to the stable, and were abundant on the straw and on the person of the accused. This was proved by the constable and others. No money was

found on him, and no keys that could have opened any outer doors of the "Swan" Inn. The accused had, however, three years before been guilty of a theft from a gentleman in the inn, which negatives his pretence that he always confined himself to the stables. It did not, however, appear that on the occasion of the theft he had unlocked any doors, or possessed the means. The witness for the Crown, Barbara Lamb, was clear on that.

'The prisoner's own solution of the mystery was not very credible. He said he had a double—or a person wearing his clothes and appearance; and he had seen this person prowling about long before the murder, and had spoken of the double to one Pott. Pott deposed that Cox had spoken of this double more than once; but admitted he never saw the double with his own eyes.

'This double, says the accused, on the fatal night let himself out of the "Swan" Inn and escaped to the garden wall. There he (Cox) came up with this mysterious person, and a scuffle ensued in which a bag was dropped and gave the sound of coin; and then Cox held the man and cried, "Thieves!" but presently received a wound and fainted, and on recovering himself, staggered to the stables and drank a pint of brandy.

'The story sounds ridiculous, and there is no direct evidence to back it; but there is a circum-

stance that lends some colour to it. There was one blood-stained instrument, and no more, found on the premises, and that knife answers to the description given by the dying man, and, indeed, may be taken to be the very knife missing from his room ; and this knife was found under the garden wall, and there the blood commenced and was traced to the stable.

‘Here,’ said my lord, ‘to my mind, lies the defence. Look at the case on all sides, gentlemen ; an undoubted murder done by hands ; no suspicion resting on any known person but the prisoner—a man who had already robbed in the inn ; a confident recognition by one whose deposition is legal evidence, but evidence we cannot cross-examine ; and a recognition by moonlight only and in the heat of a struggle.

‘If on this evidence, weakened not a little by the position of the knife and the traces of blood, and met by the prisoner’s declaration, which accords with that single branch of the evidence, you have a doubt, it is your duty to give the prisoner the full benefit of that doubt, as I have endeavoured to do ; and if you have no doubt, why then you have only to support the law and protect the lives of peaceful citizens. Whoever has committed this crime, it certainly is an alarming circumstance that, in a public inn, surrounded by

honest people, guarded by locked doors, and armed with pistols, a peaceful citizen can be robbed like this of his money and his life.'

The jury saw a murder at an inn; an accused, who had already robbed in that inn, and was denounced as his murderer by the victim. The verdict seemed to them to be Cox, or impunity. They all slept at inns; a double they had never seen; undetected accomplices they had all heard of. They waited twenty minutes, and brought in their verdict—Guilty.

The judge put on his black cap, and condemned Daniel Cox to be hanged by the neck till he was dead.

### CHAPTER III.

AFTER the trial was over, and the condemned man led back to prison to await his execution, Bradbury went straight to 13 Farringdon Street and inquired for Captain Cowen.

'No such name here,' said the good woman of the house.

'But you keep lodgers?'

'Nay, we keep but one; and he is no Captain—he is a City clerk.'

'Well, madam, it is not idle curiosity, I assure

you, but was not the lodger before him Captain Cowen?’

‘Laws, no! it was a parson. Your rakehelly Captains wouldn’t suit the like of us. ’Twas a reverend clerk; a grave old gentleman. He wasn’t very well to do, I think: his cassock was worn; but he paid his way.’

‘Keep late hours?’

‘Not when he was in town; but he had a country cure.’

‘Then you have let him in after midnight.’

‘Nay, I keep no such hours. I lent him a pass-key. He came in and out from the country when he chose. I would have you to know he was an old man, and a sober man, and an honest man; I’d wager my life on that. And excuse me, sir, but who be you, that do catechise me so about my lodgers?’

‘I am an officer, madam.’

The simple woman turned pale and clasped her hands. ‘An officer!’ she cried. ‘Alack! what have I done *now*?’

‘Why, nothing, madam,’ said the wily Bradbury. ‘An officer’s business is to protect such as you, not to trouble you, for all the world. There, now, I’ll tell you where the shoe pinches. This Captain Cowen has just sworn in a court of justice that he slept here on the 15th of last October.’

‘He never did, then. Our good parson had no acquaintances in the town. Not a soul ever visited him.’

‘Mother,’ said a young girl, peeping in, ‘I think he knew somebody of that very name. He did ask me once to post a letter for him, and it was to some man of worship, and the name was Cowen, yes—Cowen ’twas. I’m sure of it. By the same token, he never gave me another letter, and that made me pay the more attention.’

‘Jane, you are too curious,’ said the mother.

‘And I am very much obliged to you, my little maid,’ said the officer, ‘and also to you, madam,’ and so took his leave.

One evening, all of a sudden, Captain Cowen ordered a prime horse at the ‘Swan,’ strapped his valise on before him, and rode out of the yard post-haste: he went without drawing bridle to Clapham, and then looked round him, and seeing no other horseman near, trotted gently round into the Borough, then into the City, and slept at an inn in Holborn. He had bespoken a particular room beforehand, a little room he frequented. He entered it with an air of anxiety. But this soon vanished after he had examined the floor carefully. His horse was ordered at five o’clock next morning. He took a glass of strong waters



at the door to fortify his stomach, but breakfasted at Uxbridge and fed his good horse. He dined at Beaconsfield, baited at Thame, and supped with his son at Oxford; next day paid all the young man's debts, and spent a week with him.

His conduct was strange: boisterously gay and sullenly despondent by turns. During the week came an unexpected visitor, General Sir Robert Barrington. This officer was going out to America to fill an important office. He had something in view for young Cowen, and came to judge quietly of his capacity. But he did not say anything at that time, for fear of exciting hopes he might possibly disappoint.

However, he was much taken with the young man. Oxford had polished him. His modest reticence, until invited to speak, recommended him to older men, especially as his answers were judicious, when invited to give his opinion. The tutors also spoke very highly of him.

'You may well love that boy,' said General Barrington to the father.

'God bless you for praising him!' said the other. 'Ay, I love him too well.'

Soon after the General left, Cowen changed some gold for notes, and took his departure for London, having first sent word of his return. He meant to start after breakfast and make one

day of it ; but he lingered with his son, and did not cross Magdalen Bridge till one o'clock.

This time he rode through Dorchester, Benson, and Henley, and as it grew dark, resolved to sleep at Maidenhead.

Just after Hurley Bottom, at four cross-roads, three highwaymen spurred on him from right and left. ' Your money or your life ! '

He whipped a pistol out of his holster and pulled at the nearest head in a moment.

The pistol missed fire. The next moment a blow from the butt end of a horse-pistol dazed him, and he was dragged off his horse and his valise emptied in a minute.

Before they had done with him, however, there was a clatter of hoofs, and the robbers sprang to their nags and galloped away for the bare life as a troop of yeomanry rode up. The thing was so common the new-comers read the situation at a glance, and some of the best mounted gave chase ; the others attended to Captain Cowen, caught his horse, strapped on his valise, and took him with them into Maidenhead, his head aching, his heart sickening and raging by turns. All his gold gone, nothing left but a few 1*l.* notes that he had sewed into the lining of his coat.

He reached the ' Swan ' next day in a state of

sullen despair. 'A curse is on me,' he said. '*My* pistol miss fire; *my* gold gone.'

He was welcomed warmly. He stared with surprise. Barbara led the way to his old room, and opened it. He started back. 'Not there,' he said, with a shudder.

'Alack! Captain, we have kept it for you. Sure *you* are not afraid.'

'No,' said he, doggedly — 'no hope, no fear.'

She stared, but said nothing.

He had hardly got into the room when, click, a key was turned in the door of communication. 'A traveller there!' said he. Then, bitterly, 'Things are soon forgotten in an inn.'

'Not by me,' said Barbara, solemnly. 'But you know our dame, she can't let money go by her. 'Tis our best room, mostly, and nobody would use it that knows the place. He is a stranger. He is from the wars; will have it he is English, but talks foreign. He is civil enough when he is sober, but when he has got a drop he does maunder away to be sure, and sings such songs I never.'

'How long has he been here?' asked Cowen.

'Five days, and the mistress hopes he will stay as many more, just to break the spell.'

'He can stay or go,' said Cowen. 'I am in

no humour for company. I have been robbed, girl.'

'You robbed, sir? Not openly, I am sure.'

'Openly—but by numbers—three of them. I should soon have sped one, but my pistol snapped fire just like his. There, leave me, girl; fate is against me, and a curse upon me. Bubbled out of my fortune in the City, robbed of my gold upon the road. To be honest is to be a fool.'

He flung himself on the bed with a groan of anguish, and the ready tears ran down soft Barbara's cheeks. She had tact, however, in her humble way, and did not prattle to a strong man in a moment of wild distress. She just turned and cast a lingering glance of pity on him, and went to fetch him food and wine. She had often seen an unhappy man the better for eating and drinking.

When she was gone, he cursed himself for his weakness in letting her know his misfortunes. They would be all over the house soon. 'Why, that fellow next door must have heard me bawl them out. I have lost my head,' said he, 'and I never needed it more.'

Barbara returned with the cold powdered beef and carrots, and a bottle of wine she had paid for herself. She found him sullen, but composed. He made her solemnly promise not to mention his

losses. She consented readily, and said, 'You know I can hold my tongue.'

When he had eaten and drunk and felt stronger he resolved to put a question to her. 'How about that poor fellow?'

She looked puzzled a moment, then turned pale, and said, solemnly: 'Tis for this day week I hear. 'Twas to be last week, but the King did respite him for a fortnight.'

'Ah! indeed! Do you know why?'

'No, indeed. In his place, I'd rather have been put out of the way at once; for they will surely hang him.'

Now in our day the respite is very rare: a criminal is hanged or reprieved. But at the period of our story men were often respited for short or long periods, yet suffered at last. One poor wretch was respited for two years, yet executed. This respite, therefore, was nothing unusual, and Cowen, though he looked thoughtful, had no downright suspicion of anything so serious to himself as really lay beneath the surface of this not unusual occurrence.

I shall, however, let the reader know more about it. The judge in reporting the case notified to the proper authority that he desired his Majesty to know he was not entirely at ease about the verdict. There was a lacuna in the evidence

against this prisoner. He stated the flaw in a very few words. But he did not suggest any remedy.

Now the public clamoured for the man's execution, that travellers might be safe. The King's adviser thought that if the judge had serious doubts, it was his business to tell the jury so. The order for execution issued.

Three days after this the judge received a letter from Bradbury, which I give verbatim.

*The King v. Cox.*

‘MY LORD,—Forgive my writing to you in a case of blood. There is no other way. Daniel Cox was not defended. Counsel went against his wish, and would not throw suspicion on any other. That made it Cox or nobody. But there was a man in the inn whose conduct was suspicious. He furnished the wine that made the victim sleepy—and I must tell you the landlady would not let me see the remnant of the wine. She did everything to baffle me and defeat justice—he loaded two pistols so that neither could go off. He has got a pass-key, and goes in and out of the “Swan” at all hours. He provided counsel for Daniel Cox. That could only be through compunction.

‘He swore in court that he slept that night at 13 Farringdon Street. Your Lordship will find it on your notes. For ’twas you put the question,

and methinks heaven inspired you. An hour after the trial I was at 13 Farringdon Street. No Cowen and no Captain had ever lodged there nor slept there. Present lodger, a City clerk ; lodger at date of murder, an old clergyman that said he had a country cure, and got the simple body to trust him with a pass-key : so he came in and out at all hours of the night. This man was no clerk, but, as I believe, the cracksman that did the job at the "Swan."

‘ My lord, there is always two in a job of this sort—the professional man and the confederate. Cowen was the confederate, hocussed the wine, loaded the pistols, and lent his pass-key to the cracksman. The cracksman opened the other door with his tools, unless Cowen made him duplicate keys. Neither of them intended violence, or they would have used their own weapons. The wine was drugged expressly to make that needless. The cracksman, instead of a black mask, put on a calf-skin waistcoat and a bottle-nose, and that passed muster for Cox by moonlight ; it puzzled Cox by moonlight, and deceived Gardiner by moonlight.

‘ For the love of God get me a respite for the innocent man, and I will undertake to bring the crime home to the cracksman and to his confederate Cowen.’

Bradbury signed this with his name and quality.

The judge was not sorry to see the doubt his own wariness had raised so powerfully confirmed. He sent this missive on to the minister, with the remark that he had received a letter which ought not to have been sent to him, but to those in whose hands the prisoner's fate rested. He thought it his duty, however, to transcribe from his notes the question he had put to Captain Cowen, and his reply that he had slept at 13 Farringdon Street on the night of the murder, and also the substance of the prisoner's defence, with the remark that, as stated by that uneducated person, it had appeared ridiculous ; but that after studying this Bow Street officer's statements, and assuming them to be in the main correct, it did not appear ridiculous, but only remarkable, and it reconciled all the undisputed facts, whereas that Cox was the murderer was and ever must remain irreconcilable with the position of the knife and the track of the blood.

Bradbury's letter and the above comment found their way to the King, and he granted what was asked—a respite.

Bradbury and his fellows went to work to find the old clergyman, *alias* cracksman. But he had melted away without a trace, and they got no



other clew. But during Cowen's absence they got a traveller, *i.e.*, a disguised agent, into the inn, who found relics of wax in the key-holes of Cowen's outer door and of the door of communication.

Bradbury sent this information in two letters, one to the judge, and one to the minister.

But this did not advance him much. He had long been sure that Cowen was in it. It was the professional hand, the actual robber and murderer, he wanted.

The days succeeded one another : nothing was done. He lamented, too late, he had not applied for a reprieve, or even a pardon. He deplored his own presumption in assuming that he could unravel such a mystery entirely. His busy brain schemed night and day ; he lost his sleep, and even his appetite. At last, in sheer despair, he proposed to himself a new solution, and acted upon it in the dark and with consummate subtlety ; for he said to himself : ' I am in deeper water than I thought. Lord, how they skim a case at the Old Bailey ! They take a pond for a puddle, and go to fathom it with a forefinger.'

Captain Cowen sank into a settled gloom ; but he no longer courted solitude ; it gave him the horrors. He preferred to be in company, though

he no longer shone in it. He made acquaintance with his neighbour, and rather liked him. The man had been in the Commissariat Department, and seemed half surprised at the honour a Captain did him in conversing with him. But he was well versed in all the incidents of the late wars, and Cowen was glad to go with him into the past ; for the present was dead, and the future horrible.

This Mr. Cutler, so deferential when sober, was inclined to be more familiar when in his cups, and that generally ended in his singing and talking to himself in his own room in the absurdest way. He never went out without a black leather case strapped across his back like a dispatch-box. When joked and asked as to the contents, he used to say, 'Papers, papers,' curtly.

One evening, being rather the worse for liquor, he dropped it, and there was a metallic sound. This was immediately commented on by the wags of the company.

'That fell heavy for paper,' said one.

'And there was a ring,' said another.

'Come, unload thy pack, comrade, and show us thy papers.'

Cutler was sobered in a moment, and looked scared. Cowen observed this, and quietly left the room. He went upstairs to his own room,

and, mounting on a chair, he found a thin place in the partition and made an eyelet-hole.

That very night he made use of this with good effect. Cutler came up to bed, singing and whistling, but presently threw down something heavy, and was silent. Cowen spied, and saw him kneel down, draw from his bosom a key suspended round his neck by a ribbon, and open the dispatch-box. There were papers in it, but only to deaden the sound of a great many new guineas that glittered in the light of the candle, and seemed to fire, and fill the receptacle.

Cutler looked furtively round, plunged his hands in them, took them out by handfuls, admired them, kissed them, and seemed to worship them, locked them up again, and put the black case under his pillow.

While they were glaring in the light, Cowen's eyes flashed with unholy fire. He clutched his hands at them where he stood, but they were inaccessible. He sat down despondent, and cursed the injustice of fate. Bubbled out of money in the City; robbed on the road: but when another had money, it was safe: he left his keys in the locks of both doors, and his gold never quitted him.

Not long after this discovery he got a letter from his son, telling him that the college bill for

battels, or commons, had come in, and he was unable to pay it: he begged his father to disburse it, or he should lose credit.

This tormented the unhappy father, and the proximity of gold tantalised him so that he bought a phial of laudanum and secreted it about his person.

‘Better die,’ said he, ‘and leave my boy to Barrington. Such a legacy from his dead comrade will be sacred, and he has the world at his feet.’

He even ordered a bottle of red port and kept it by him to swill the laudanum in, and so get drunk and die.

But when it came to the point he faltered.

Meantime the day drew near for the execution of Daniel Cox. Bradbury had undertaken too much; his cracksman seemed to the King’s advisers as shadowy as the double of Daniel Cox.

The evening before that fatal day Cowen came to a wild resolution; he would go to Tyburn at noon, which was the hour fixed, and would die under that man’s gibbet—so was this powerful mind unhinged.

This desperate idea was uppermost in his mind when he went up to his bedroom.

But he resisted. No, he would never play the coward while there was a chance left on the

cards ; while there is life there is hope. He seized the bottle, uncorked it, and tossed off a glass. It was potent and tingled through his veins and warmed his heart.

He set the bottle down before him. He filled another glass ; but before he put it to his lips jocund noises were heard coming up the stairs and noisy, drunken voices, and two boon companions of his neighbour Cutler—who had a double-bedded room opposite him—parted with him for the night. He was not drunk enough, it seems, for he kept demanding ‘t’other bottle.’ His friends, however, were of a different opinion ; they bundled him into his room and locked him in from the other side, and shortly after burst into their own room, and were more garrulous than articulate.

Cutler, thus disposed of, kept saying and shouting and whining that he must have ‘t’other bottle.’ In short, any one at a distance would have thought he was announcing sixteen different propositions, so various were the accents of anger, grief, expostulation, deprecation, supplication, imprecation, and whining tenderness in which he declared he must have ‘t’other bo’l.’

At last he came bump against the door of communication. ‘Neighbour, said he, ‘your wuship, I mean, great man of war.’

‘ Well, sir? ’

‘ Let’s have t’other bo’l.’

‘ Cowen’s eyes flashed ; he took out his phial of laudanum and emptied about a fifth part of it into the bottle.

Cutler whined at the door: ‘ Do open the door, your wuship, and let’s have t’other (hic).’

‘ Why, the key is on your side.’

A feeble-minded laugh at the discovery, a fumbling with the key, and the door opened and Cutler stood in the doorway, with his cravat disgracefully loose and his visage wreathed in foolish smiles. His eyes goggled ; he pointed with a mixture of surprise and low cunning at the table.

‘ Why, there is t’other bo’l ! Let’s have’m.’

‘ Nay,’ said Cowen, ‘ I drain no bottles at this time ; one glass suffices me. I drink your health.’ He raised his glass.

Cutler grabbed the bottle and said, brutally: ‘ And I’ll drink yours ! ’ and shut the door with a slam, but was too intent on his prize to lock it.

Cowen sat and listened.

He heard the wine gurgle and the drunkard draw a long breath of delight.

Then there was a pause ; then a snatch of song, rather melodious and more articulate than Mr. Cutler’s recent attempts at discourse.

Then another gurgle and another loud ‘ Ah ! ’

Then a vocal attempt, which broke down by degrees.

Then a snore.

Then a somnolent remark—‘All right!’

Then a staggering on to his feet. Then a swaying to and fro, and a subsiding against the door.

Then by-and-by a little reel at the bed and a fall flat on the floor.

Then stertorous breathing.

Cowen sat still at the key-hole some time, then took off his boots and softly mounted his chair, and applied his eye to the peep-hole.

Cutler was lying on his stomach between the table and the bed.

Cowen came to the door on tip-toe and turned the handle gently; the door yielded.

He lost nerve for the first time in his life. What horrible shame, should the man come to his senses and see him!

He stepped back into his own room, ripped up his portmanteau, and took out, from between the leather and the lining, a disguise and a mask. He put them on.

Then he took his loaded cane; for he thought to himself, ‘No more stabbing in that room,’ and he crept through the door like a cat.

The man lay breathing stertorously, and his

lips blowing out at every exhalation like lifeless lips urged by a strong wind, so that Cowen began to fear, not that he might wake, but that he might die.

It flashed across him he should have to leave England.

What he came to do seemed now wonderfully easy; he took the key by its ribbon carefully off the sleeper's neck, unlocked the dispatch-box, took off his hat, put the gold into it, locked the dispatch-box, replaced the key, took up his hatful of money, and retired slowly on tiptoe as he came.

He had but deposited his stick and the booty on the bed, when the sham drunkard pinned him from behind, and uttered a shrill whistle. With a fierce snarl Cowen whirled his captor round like a feather, and dashed with him against the post of his own door, stunning the man so that he relaxed his hold, and Cowen whirled him round again, and kicked him in the stomach so felly that he was doubled up out of the way, and contributed nothing more to the struggle except his last meal. At this very moment two Bow Street runners rushed madly upon Cowen through the door of communication. He met one in full career with a blow so tremendous that it sounded through the house, and drove him all across the



room against the window, where he fell down senseless; the other he struck rather short, and though the blood spurted and the man staggered, he was on him again in a moment, and pinned him. Cowen, a master of pugilism, got his head under his left shoulder, and pommelled him cruelly; but the fellow managed to hold on, till a powerful foot kicked in the door at a blow, and Bradbury himself sprang on Captain Cowen with all the fury of a tiger; he seized him by the throat from behind, and throttled him, and set his knee to his back; the other, though mauled and bleeding, whipped out a short rope, and pinioned him in a turn of the hand. Then all stood panting but the disabled men, and once more the passage and the room were filled with pale faces and panting bosoms.

Lights flashed on the scene, and instantly loud screams from the landlady and her maids, and as they screamed they pointed with trembling fingers.

And well they might. There—caught red-handed in an act of robbery and violence, a few steps from the place of the mysterious murder, stood the stately figure of Captain Cowen and the mottled face and bottle nose of Daniel Cox, condemned to die in just twelve hours' time.

## CHAPTER IV.

‘Ay, scream, ye fools,’ roared Bradbury, ‘that couldn’t see a church by daylight.’ Then, shaking his fist at Cowen: ‘Thou villain! ’Tisn’t one man you have murdered, ’tis two. But please God I’ll save one of them yet, and hang you in his place. Way, there! not a moment to lose.’

In another minute they were all in the yard, and a hackney-coach sent for.

Captain Cowen said to Bradbury, ‘This thing on my face is choking me.’

‘Oh, better than you have been choked—at Tyburn and all.’

‘Hang me. Don’t pillory me. I’ve served my country.’

Bradbury removed the wax mask. He said afterward he had no power to refuse the villain, he was so grand and gentle.

‘Thank you, sir. Now, what can I do for you? Save Daniel Cox?’

‘Ay, do that and I’ll forgive you.’

‘Give me a sheet of paper.’

Bradbury, impressed by the man’s tone of sincerity, took him into the bar, and getting all his men round him, placed paper and ink before him.

He addressed to General Barrington, in attendance on his Majesty, these :

‘GENERAL,—See his Majesty betimes, tell him from me that Daniel Cox, condemned to die at noon, is innocent, and get him a reprieve. Oh, Barrington, come to your lost comrade. The bearer will tell you where I am. I cannot.

‘EDWARD COWEN.’

‘Send a man you can trust to Windsor with that, and take me to my most welcome death.’

A trusty officer was dispatched to Windsor, and in about an hour Cowen was lodged in Newgate.

All that night Bradbury laboured to save the man that was condemned to die. He knocked up the sheriff of Middlesex, and told him all.

‘Don’t come to me,’ said the sheriff; ‘go to the minister.’

He rode to the minister’s house. The minister was up. His wife gave a ball—windows blazing, shadows dancing—music—lights. Night turned into day. Bradbury knocked. The door flew open, and revealed a line of bedizened footmen, dotted at intervals up the stairs.

‘I must see my lord. Life or death. I’m an officer from Bow Street.’

‘You can’t see my lord. He is entertaining the Proosian Ambassador and his sweet.’

‘I must see him, or an innocent man will die to-morrow. Tell him so. Here’s a guinea.’

‘Is there? Step aside here.’

He waited in torments till the message went through the gamut of lackeys, and got, more or less mutilated, to the minister.

He detached a buffer, who proposed to Mr. Bradbury to call at the Do-little office in Westminster next morning.

‘No,’ said Bradbury, ‘I don’t leave the house till I see him. Innocent blood shall not be spilled for want of a word in time.’

The buffer retired, and in came a duffer, who said the occasion was not convenient.

‘Ay, but it is,’ said Bradbury, ‘and if my lord is not here in five minutes, I’ll go upstairs and tell my tale before them all, and see if they are all hair-dressers’ dummies, without heart, or conscience, or sense.’

In five minutes in came a gentleman, with an order on his breast, and said, ‘You are a Bow Street officer?’

‘Yes, my lord.’

‘Name?’

‘Bradbury.’

‘You say the man condemned to die to-morrow is innocent?’

‘Yes, my lord.’

‘How do you know?’

‘Just taken the real culprit.’

‘When is the other to suffer?’

‘Twelve to-morrow.’

‘Seems short time. Humph! Will you be good enough to take a line to the sheriff? Formal message to-morrow.’ The actual message ran :

‘Delay execution of Cox till we hear from Windsor. Bearer will give reasons.’

With this Bradbury hurried away, not to the sheriff, but the prison : and infected the jailer and the chaplain and all the turnkeys with pity for the condemned, and the spirit of delay.

Bradbury breakfasted, and washed his face, and off to the sheriff. Sheriff was gone out. Bradbury hunted him from pillar to post, and could find him nowhere. He was at last obliged to go and wait for him at Newgate.

He arrived at the stroke of twelve to superintend the execution. Bradbury put the minister’s note into his hand.

‘This is no use,’ said he. ‘I want an order from his Majesty, or the Privy Council at least.’

‘Not to delay,’ suggested the chaplain. ‘You have all the day for it.’

‘All the day! I can’t be all the day hanging a single man. My time is precious, gentlemen.’ Then, his bark being worse than his bite, he said,

‘I shall come again at four o’clock, and then, if there is no news from Windsor, the law must take its course.’

He never came again, though, for, even as he turned his back to retire, there was a faint cry from the farthest part of the crowd, a paper raised on a hussar’s lance, and, as the mob fell back on every side, a royal aide-de-camp rode up, followed closely by the mounted runner, and delivered to the sheriff a reprieve under the sign-manual of his Majesty, George the First.

At 2 P.M. of the same day General Sir Robert Barrington reached Newgate, and saw Captain Cowen in private. That unhappy man fell on his knees and made a confession.

Barrington was horrified, and turned as cold as ice to him. He stood erect as a statue. ‘A soldier to rob,’ said he. ‘Murder was bad enough—but to rob!’

Cowen, with his head and hands all hanging down, could only say, faintly: ‘I have been robbed and ruined, and it was for my boy. Ah me! what will become of him? I have lost my soul for him, and now he will be ruined and disgraced—by me, who would have died for him.’ The strong man shook with agony, and his head and hands almost touched the ground.

Sir Robert Barrington looked at him and pondered.

‘No,’ said he, relenting a little, ‘that is the one thing I can do for you. I had made up my mind to take your son to Canada as my secretary, and I will take him. But he must change his name. I sail next Thursday.’

The broken man stared wildly ; then started up and blessed him ; and from that moment the wild hope entered his breast that he might keep his son unstained by his crime, and even ignorant of it.

Barrington said that was impossible ; but yielded to the father’s prayers, and consented to act as if it was possible. He would send a messenger to Oxford, with money and instructions to bring the young man up and put him on board the ship at Gravesend.

This difficult scheme once conceived, there was not a moment to be lost. Barrington sent down a mounted messenger to Oxford, with money and instructions.

Cowen sent for Bradbury, and asked him when he was to appear at Bow Street.

‘To-morrow, I suppose.’

‘Do me a favour. Get all your witnesses ; make the case complete, and show me only once to the public before I am tried.’

‘Well, Captain,’ said Bradbury, ‘you were square with me about poor Cox. I don’t see as it matters much to you; but I’ll not say you nay.’ He saw the solicitor for the Crown, and asked a few days to collect all his evidence. The functionary named Friday.

This was conveyed next day to Cowen, and put him in a fever; it gave him a chance of keeping his son ignorant, but no certainty. Ships were eternally detained at Gravesend waiting for a wind; there were no steam-tugs then to draw them into blue water. Even going down the Channel letters boarded them if the wind slacked. He walked his room to and fro, like a caged tiger, day and night.

Wednesday evening Barrington came with the news that his son was at the ‘Star’ in Cornhill. ‘I have got him to bed,’ said he, ‘and, Lord forgive me, I have let him think he will see you before we go down to Gravesend to-morrow.’

‘Then let me see him,’ said the miserable father. ‘He shall know naught from me.’

They applied to the jailer, and urged that he could be a prisoner all the time, surrounded by constables in disguise. No; the jailer would not risk his place and an indictment. Bradbury was sent for, and made light of the responsibility. ‘I brought him here,’ said he, ‘and I will take



him to the "Star," I and my fellows. Indeed, he will give us no trouble this time. Why, that would blow the gaff, and make the young gentleman fly to the whole thing.'

'It can only be done by authority,' was the jailer's reply.

'Then by authority it shall be done,' said Sir Robert. 'Mr. Bradbury, have three men here with a coach at one o'clock, and a regiment, if you like, to watch the "Star."'

Punctually at one came Barrington with an authority. It was a request from the Queen. The jailer took it respectfully. It was an authority not worth a button; but he knew he could not lose his place, with this writing to brandish at need.

The father and son dined with the General at the 'Star.' Bradbury and one of his fellows waited as private servants; other officers, in plain clothes, watched back and front.

At three o'clock father and son parted, the son with many tears, the father with dry eyes, but a voice that trembled as he blessed him.

Young Cowen, now Morris, went down to Gravesend with his chief; the criminal back to Newgate, respectfully bowed from the door of the 'Star' by landlord and waiters.

At first he was comparatively calm, but as the night advanced became restless, and by-and-by began to pace his cell again like a caged lion.

At twenty minutes past eleven a turnkey brought him a line; a horseman had galloped in with it from Gravesend.

‘A fair wind—we weigh anchor at the full tide. It is a merchant vessel, and the Captain under my orders to keep off shore and take no messages. Farewell. Turn to the God you have forgotten. He alone can pardon you.’

On receiving this note, Cowen betook him to his knees.

In this attitude the jailer found him when he went his round.

He waited till the Captain rose, and then let him know that an able lawyer was in waiting, instructed to defend him at Bow Street next morning. The truth is, the females of the ‘Swan’ had clubbed money for this purpose.

Cowen declined to see him. ‘I thank you, sir,’ said he, ‘I will defend myself.’

He said, however, he had a little favour to ask.

‘I have been,’ said he, ‘of late much agitated and fatigued, and a sore trial awaits me in the morning. A few hours of unbroken sleep would be a boon to me.’

‘The turnkeys must come in to see you are all right.’

‘It is their duty ; but I will lie in sight of the door if they will be good enough not to wake me.’

‘There can be no objection to that, Captain, and I am glad to see you calmer.’

‘Thank you ; never calmer in my life.’

He got his pillow, set two chairs, and composed himself to sleep. He put the candle on the table, that the turnkeys might peep through the door and see him.

Once or twice they peeped in very softly, and saw him sleeping in the full light of the candle, to moderate which, apparently, he had thrown a white handkerchief over his face.

At nine in the morning they brought him his breakfast, as he must be at Bow Street between ten and eleven.

When they came so near him it struck them he lay too still.

They took off the handkerchief.

He had been dead some hours.

Yes, there, calm, grave, and noble, incapable, as it seemed, either of the passions that had destroyed him or the tender affection which redeemed yet inspired his crimes, lay the corpse of Edward Cowen.

Thus miserably perished a man in whom were many elements of greatness.

He left what little money he had to Bradbury, in a note imploring him to keep particulars out of the journals, for his son's sake, and such was the influence on Bradbury of the scene at the 'Star,' the man's dead face, and his dying words, that, though public detail was his interest, nothing transpired but that the gentleman who had been arrested on suspicion of being concerned in the murder at the 'Swan Inn' had committed suicide : to which was added by another hand ; 'Cox, however, has the King's pardon, and the affair still remains shrouded with mystery.'

Cox was permitted to see the body of Cowen, and, whether the features had gone back to youth, or his own brain, long sobered in earnest, had enlightened his memory, recognised him as a man he had seen committed for horse stealing at Ipswich, when he himself was the mayor's groom ; but some girl lent the accused a file, and he cut his way out of the cage.

Cox's calamity was his greatest blessing. He went into Newgate scarcely knowing there was a God ; he came out thoroughly enlightened in that respect by the teaching of the chaplain and the death of Cowen. He went in a drunkard ; the noose that dangled over his head so long terri-

fied him into life-long sobriety—for he laid all the blame on liquor—and he came out as bitter a foe to drink as drink had been to him.

His case excited sympathy; a considerable sum was subscribed to set him up in trade. He became a horse-dealer on a small scale: but he was really a most excellent judge of horses, and, being sober, enlarged his business; horsed a coach or two; attended fairs, and eventually made a fortune by dealing in cavalry horses under Government contracts.

As his money increased, his nose diminished, and when he died, old and regretted, only a pink tinge revealed the habits of his earlier life.

Mrs. Martha Cust and Barbara Lamb were no longer sure, but they doubted to their dying day the innocence of the ugly fellow, and the guilt of the handsome, civil-spoken gentleman.

But they converted nobody to their opinion; for they gave their reasons.



14-11

## *THE KINDLY JEST.*

THERE appear to be at present two great divisions of humorous wit—the repartee and the practical joke. Both these have an aggressive character. To begin with the repartee—it is generally a slap in the face.

A few years ago the country possessed a master of repartee, Mr. Douglas Jerrold. Specimens of his style still survive in the memory of his contemporaries. A mediocre writer, employed on the same subject as himself, said :

‘ You know, Jerrold, you and I are rowing in the same boat ! ’

‘ Yes,’ replied the wit, ‘ but not with the same sculls ! ’

Another inferior artist is eating soup at the Garrick Club. He praises it to Jerrold, and tells him it is calf-tail soup. ‘ Aye,’ says Jerrold, ‘ extremes meet.’

These are strong specimens ; but take milder ones, still the aggressive character is there. Pecuniary calamity overtook a friend of Mr.

Edmund Burke. Another friend went to console him, and, like Job's comforters, told him it was all his own fault.

'How could you be so unfeeling?' said Mr. Burke, when he heard of it.

'Unfeeling, sir,' says the other; 'why, I went to him directly, and poured oil into his wounds.'

'Oil of vitriol,' says the statesman.

I need not say that a thousand examples of the kind are to be found in literature. The witty Voltaire receded with admirable dexterity from good-nature into wit. He permitted himself to praise some gentleman rather warmly. His hearer said:

'This is very good of you, for he does not speak of you with any respect—quite the reverse.'

'Ah!' said Voltaire, '*humanum est errare*. Probably we are both of us mistaken.'

An observer of witty men and their sayings summed the matter up as follows: *Diseur de bon-mots, mauvais caractère.*

Even where the wit is without personality, it does not always lose its aggressive character. See how the personages in 'The School for Scandal' explain why wit and good-nature are so seldom united. The explanations are not bitter, but still they are biting.

Now go from this to the practical joke, which



is always an attempt at humour. Dissect the practical joke. Egotism and a poverty of real wit tempt some dunce to inflict moderate pain upon another, keeping well out of it himself; and, his being out of it and the other being in it makes him feel humorous; and this really favours the narrow theory of Hobbes of Malmesbury, that 'laughter arises from a glorying in ourselves at some superiority over our neighbour.' The dull humorist in this style chips bristles, and strews them in his friend's bed, or makes him up what is called an *apple-pie* bed—a wonderful corruption of *cap-à-pie*. Meantime, *his* bed is all right, and his heart rejoices. One of these humorists put a skeleton into a young lady's bed, down in Somersetshire, then retired softly and awaited the result with the idiotic chuckle of a dull dog who has gone astray into humour. The result was that the lady fell screaming on the floor, was taken up insane, and ended her days in a mad-house. Another such humorist battened down the hatches of a small trading-vessel in the Thames. Smoke was created somehow in the hold (I forget by what cause), and the crew, consisting of four poor wretches, tried in vain to escape. Their very cries were stifled, and, the next day, their smoking corpses were recovered, grim monuments of a blockhead's humour.

Solomon has observed that Nature contains tremendous animals. At the head of the list he places a couple, viz., a bear robbed of her whelps, and an irritated fool. Leaving these two terrible creatures to figure cheek by jowl in the sacred page, I beg the third place for a dull man or woman trying to be witty.

Now all this is not absolutely necessary. It is more difficult to say witty and kindly things than witty and ill-natured things ; yet it is within the powers of the human understanding.

A young lady walking in her garden with Sydney Smith pointed out to him an everlasting pea, reported to blossom beautifully ; ‘but,’ said she, ‘we have never been able to bring it to perfection.’

‘Then,’ said the kindly wit, ‘let me bring perfection to the pea,’ and so led her by the hand to a closer inspection of the flower.

Coulon, a famous mimic in Louis XV.’s time, took off the King as well as his subjects. The King heard of it and insisted on seeing the imitation. He was not offended at it, and gave Coulon a fine diamond pin. Coulon looks at the pin, and says, ‘Coming to me, this ought to be paste, but coming from your Majesty it is naturally a diamond.’ Is the element of wit extinguished here ? I trow not.

Frederick the Great disbelieved in physicians, and said that invalids died oftener of their remedies than their maladies, and, as the lancet was rife in his day, probably he was not very far wrong. However, he fell sick, and the weakness of his body, I suppose, affected his mind ; so he sent for a physician, Dr. Zimmermann ; but at sight of him his theory revived, and his habitual good manners led him to say to Zimmermann, by way of greeting, ‘ Now, doctor, I’ll be bound to say you have sent many an honest fellow underground.’

Zimmermann replied, without hesitation, ‘ Not so many as your Majesty—nor with so much credit to myself.’

Isn’t that wit, if you please? Ay, and of a very high order. But it is possible to convert even the practical joke to amiability, and to substitute the milk of human kindness where hitherto men have dealt in adulterated vinegar. And of this I beg to offer an example.

A certain German nobleman provided his son with a tutor, who was to attend closely to him, and improve his mind. This tutor, it seems, took for his example a certain predecessor of his, who used to coach young Cyrus in-doors and out ; and both these tutors, each in his own country and his own generation, had the brains to see that to

educate a young fellow you must not merely set him tasks to learn in-doors, and then let him run wild in the open air, but must accompany him wherever he goes, and guide him with your greater experience in his practical judgment of the various events that pass before his eyes. For how shall he learn to apply an experience which he does not really possess? What a boy learns by rote is not knowledge, but knowledge's shadow.

One day these two came to the side of a wood, and there they found a tree half felled, and a pair of wooden shoes. The woodman was cooling his hot feet in a neighbouring stream. The young nobleman took up a couple of pebbles, and said :

‘I’ll put these in that old fellow’s shoes, and we’ll see his grimaces.’

‘Hum!’ says the tutor, ‘I don’t think you’ll get much fun out of that. You see he’s a poor man, and probably thinks his lot hard enough without his having stones put into his shoes. I can’t help thinking that if you were to put a little money in instead—and you have plenty of that, you know, more than I should allow you if I were your father—the old fellow would be far more flabbergasted, and his grimaces would be more entertaining, and you would be more satisfied with yourself.’

The generous youth caught fire at the idea, and put a double dollar into each shoe. Then the confederates hid behind a hedge and watched the result of their trick. They had not long to wait. An elderly man came back to his hard work—work a little beyond his years—and slipped his right foot into his right shoe. Finding something hard in it, he took it off again, and discovered a double dollar. His grave face wore a look of amazement, and the spies behind the hedge chuckled. He laid the coin in the palm of his hand, and, still gazing at it with wonder, he mechanically slipped his foot into the other sabot. There he found another coin. He took it up, and holding out both his hands, gazed with wonder at them. Then he suddenly clasped his hands together, and fell on his knees, and cried out in a loud voice, ‘O God, this is your doing. Nobody but you knows the state we are in at home, my wife in her bed, my children starving, and I hardly able to earn a crust with these old hands. It is you who have sent me these blessed coins by one of your angels.’

Then he paused, and another idea struck him :

‘ Perhaps it is not an angel from heaven. There are human angels, even in this world ; kind hearts that love to feed the hungry, and succour the poor. One of these has passed by, like sunshine in winter,

and has seen the poor old man's shoes, and has dropped all this money into them, and gone on again, and not even waited to be thanked. But a poor man's blessing flies fast, and shall overtake him and be with him to the end of the world, and to the end of his own time. May God and his angels go with you, keep you from poverty and from sickness, and may you feel in your own heart a little of the warmth and the joy you have brought to me and mine. I'll do no more work to-day. I'll go home to my wife and children, and they shall kneel, and bless the hand that has given us this comfort, and then gone away and thought nothing of it.'

He put on his shoes, shouldered his axe, and went home.

Then the spies had a little dialogue.

'This I call really good fun,' said the tutor, in rather a shaky voice; 'and what are you snivelling at?'

'Tisn't I that am snivelling so; it is you.'

'Well, then, we are both snivelling,' said the tutor, and with that, being foreigners, they embraced, and did not conceal their emotion any longer.

'Come on,' said the boy.

'Where next?' asked the tutor.

'Why, follow him to be sure. I want to know

where he lives. Do you think I will let his wife be sick, and his children starve, after this ? ’

‘Dear boy,’ said the tutor, ‘I don’t for a moment think you will. Yours is not the age, nor the heart, that does things by halves.’

So they dogged their victim home, and the young nobleman secured a modest competence from that hour to a very worthy and poverty-stricken family. Now I think that both these veins of humour might be worked to the profit of mankind, and especially of those who can contrive to be witty or humorous, yet kindly, and of those who will profit by this improved sort of humour. I have heard of an eccentric gentleman who had some poor female relations, and asked them to tea, a beverage he himself detested. He retired before the tea-drinking commenced, and watched their faces from another room. They found the cups mighty heavy, and could hardly lift the ponderous liquid. They set them down, probed the contents, and found a sediment of forty sovereigns in each cup. Each discovery being announced by little screeches, and followed by continuous cackling, the eccentric host appears to have got more fun out of it than by the vulgar process of drawing cheques for the amount.

The human mind, when once the attention of many persons is given to a subject, is so ingenious,

and gets so much metal out of a small vein of ore, that I feel assured, if people at home and abroad will bring their minds to bear on this subject, they may in some degree improve manners, and embellish human life with good-hearted humour and kindly jokes.



## *AN OLD BACHELOR'S ADVENTURE.<sup>1</sup>*

I AM a bit of a character—a geographical Paul Pry. I pry, not into the affairs of my neighbours, but into nooks and corners. I grope New York City and suburbs, and make little sketches of things, places, and figures for my little museum.

One pleasant afternoon I walked down Broadway, and then made for an unexplored suburb. The hum of fashion died in my ear, and I passed through quieter streets, and next by straggling houses, and at last I emerged on a spot that few would expect to find so near the great city. It was an Irish colony. Hovels, at the doors of which old women with flaunting caps squatted and smoked ; half-naked children started out from dunghills, wheelbarrows, hen-coops, and the dust of the road, where they had lain hid, being of the same colour, to stare at the stranger ; and Celtic goats discerned a Sassenach, and marched gravely at me with crested neck and pointed horns, in

<sup>1</sup> By Charles Reade and J. Lewis.

spite of objurgations from the old women, who knew by experience what these hospitable creatures would be at. I took out my paper to sketch, but, goats increasing, had to walk faster and faster, scratching down my outlines as I receded, till my walk became nearly a run, and my lines exceeding wavy; and the wild beasts, accumulating, drove me out entirely, amidst the whoops of the infants, and I mounted a rising ground, and there burst upon my sight—a paradise. A valley of the freshest green sloped gently toward the Hudson; the river shone like molten silver in the afternoon sun: it was alive with puffing steamers and white sail craft. A band of music, accompanying a picnic party, filled the air with melody.

I stood enraptured, and being now safe from horns and Celtic infants, made my little sketch—and then felt hungry.

In looking round for some place to lunch, I espied a mongrel house, half-way between a log-cabin and a comfortable cottage, with a broad, good-natured female face framed in the low doorway. There was a speculative look in her shrewd gray eye. For why? She kept a primitive beer-garden; it was a very humble affair, little more than a huckster's stand.

My eye fixed on a basket of rosy, well-polished

apples ; I bought a dozen, and some biscuits, and seated myself near a small table under the shadow of a tall rock, to munch them. When I had munched my fill, I took out my paper to sketch the place and Mrs. Murphy, who still filled the door-way, and looked good-humour in person. But I had not made a dozen strokes when I was interrupted by something rough rubbing against my leg. It was a pig. Up went my legs on the table, and no doubt my face betrayed affliction ; for Mrs. Murphy snatched up a besom, and strode forth with a ‘Bad luck to ye, Barney.’ The pig awaited not her coming, but turned off with a grunt and a leer of his little eyes, and trotted down the hill.

Mrs. Murphy retired to her sentry-box, ‘I to my diary,’ as Mr. Pepys hath it, and had made as many as five strokes more when—‘Cock-a-doodle-doo’—I became aware of an incensed rooster, stationed at my very feet, with a string of lovers at his tail. He defied the Sassenach with shrillest clarion.

Then I sat cross-legged on my chair, and revenged myself for his pibroch by including him in my sketch. My chair became the centre of a dozen hens, all picking up the crumbs I had dropped. The eagle-eyed Sultan had seen me dropping crumbs, and had convened his harem to

profit by Sassenach prodigality. He now stood aloof while the hens fed, and I admired him, and sketched him, and contrasted him with your modern lord of creation. How often we find the latter gorging himself at his club, while his better half is left at home to dine on slops.

The hens soon picked up all my crumbs and sought fresh pastures; and I took down my legs and sketched away, in which occupation I was visited by a she-goat, who marched up and gazed benignly, but uttered a querulous sound.

‘What is the matter with *you*?’ said I.

Mrs. Murphy was amused. ‘Shure, it’s a cracker the crachure is after,’ said she.

Thereupon I gave ‘the crachure’ one. She ate it with perfect solemnity, but the next moment stood up on her hind legs and beat the air with her fore-feet.

‘That is for another, I suppose,’ said I.

‘Ye may take your oath o’ that same, sor,’ said Mrs. Murphy, and had to hold on by the door-posts to laugh.

So I went on feeding Nanny, and for every cracker she supplied a fresh antic. How she came to be wasted on that desert, and not paraded in some world-renowned circus is wonderful. First she stood on three legs, then on two, then on one; and when there were no more crackers and I told

her so, she attempted a somersault and failed ridiculously. Perhaps that mortified her ; at all events, the moment she could pull herself together after it she made a hearty lunge at my leg, and her sharp horn only missed it by half an inch, owing to my curling up again in time. My lady then stalked down the hill after the pig, and cackle, cackle, cackle burst out a hideous concatenation of laughs in the air right over my head.

I rose to go. Now I caved. I had borne much from the animal world that day, including the Celtic infants ; but there is a species I abominate —apes, ourang-outangs, devils of the wood, and gorillas. I detest them all. A scientific friend tells me that they are only deteriorated negroes. I can't help that—I don't like 'em ; and so I rose hastily, resolved to seek repose and quiet where alone they were to be found—in Broadway. Mrs. Murphy saw disgust and other passions painted in my face, for she interposed hastily, and assured me it was only her 'ould man.'

I looked up, and sure enough it was not an ourang-outang, but a ragged Irishman, with a chip hat, perched like a crow at the top of the rock. Mrs. Murphy told me it was he who had taught the 'baste' her tricks—he had nothing better to do, his legs being crippled with rheumatism. It seems this crippling of legs makes an Irishman

strong in the arms, for, during this explanation, Mr. Murphy descended the perpendicular rock hand over hand, clutching successive tufts of vegetation, which all-foreseeing Nature had disposed at intervals for that purpose, and, alighting at my feet, removed his chip hat and made me an obeisance down to the ground that would have graced the court of Louis le Grand, while his rags fluttered in the air. At that very moment an accordion, touched by a master-hand, poured forth a beautiful melody.

Surprise struck me dumb.

‘It’s me darlint!’ cried Mrs. Murphy; ‘there she is now coming up the hill ayont.’

As she spoke Mrs. Murphy pointed, and from among the sombre rocks there emerged the form of a young girl. She came gaily toward us, a gipsy hat on her head and laden with all manner of packages. A girl with reddish-brown luxuriant hair, and violet eyes so large and serene that took the heart by storm; her face, tinted a delicate rose-colour, beamed with animation. The old people brightened at sight of her, and Mrs. Murphy whispered me, with superfluous mystery, that she went into the city twice a week, and always played herself home, though there was no need of that, for shure wasn’t she the light of the house and the pulse of their hearts; and didn’t

she keep them all going with the work of her dainty fingers?

The girl arrived in the middle of this eulogy, and heard it. 'Stop that now,' said she; 'stop it intirely!' and flung both arms round her mother's neck, accordion and all; and there they were locked in a loving embrace, as if they had been parted a year. But the very next moment the laughter-loving girl looked round at the old man and me, and played 'Garry Owen' behind her mother's head without unclasping her arms, but with a sidelong glance at us that did my business on the spot. Oh, for a painter's brush, to convey the grace, the tenderness, the sly, pretty fun of this most original and Irish proceeding! Then a sudden thought struck me: this must be a sweet place to drink tea in. I said as much; and in a very few minutes a table was brought out, some eggs boiled, and the old man, and the beauty, and I sat down; Mrs. Murphy cooked for us. The beauty, whose name was 'Airy'—though I am not sure that I spell it rightly—took a seat by me, and modestly, but frankly, entered into conversation with me. I learned from her that she had been educated by nuns, and was a skilful workwoman—could embroider, and was constantly employed in repairing lace. This work was well-paid, and enabled her to keep the whole family,

in spite of her father's misfortune in being crippled with rheumatism. Mr. Murphy struck in here, and announced that it was not his intention to be always a cripple—he was on the mend; and the only thing that troubled him was that he could be turned out any minute, not having a lease of the 'primisses.'

'Who is your landlord?' said I.

'Sure, it's Mister Kirby himself,' said he, with a stare at my ignorance.

'Kirby?' inquired I. 'What's his Christian name?'

That was a puzzler. However, amongst them they contrived to make out that it was Nathan, and that he lived in Brooklyn.

Now it happened, strangely enough, that Mr. Nathan Kirby was a friend of mine, and I had once laid him under a little obligation. So I told Murphy I thought I might perhaps be able to get him a lease, and I certainly would if I could. This I said with a glance at Airy, which she repaid with a flash of gratitude that thrilled through me.

After tea I asked her to play to us again. She smiled and complied at once, and played most ravishingly. I am a musician myself and play the accordion; I daresay I could execute more downright difficulties on it than Airy. But she had a



way of transfusing her sex into it that is indescribable. The soul, the delicacy of touch, the sweetness, were admirable. She sang to it, too, in a full rich voice that made the rocks echo and two sparrows chirp responsive.

The sun set, and I must away. To my surprise Airy offered, of her own accord, to show me a short way to the boulevard, where I could take the stage handy. The situation was becoming quite romantic. I am an old bachelor; and was it so very strange that something insidious crept into my veins when Airy fixed her large magnetic eyes full on my face? What brightness this charming child of nature would instil into my luxurious home! Was it mean and selfish to allow such thoughts to enter my mind? I think my excuse then was to rescue her from a life of toil.

A short cut brought us to the main road. Before we parted she gave me her hand—not the hand of rude toil, but one a duchess might have envied.

All the way home that soft touch kept me company, and an unwonted warmth gathered round my heart.

Within three days I made it my business to call on the Murphys again. I found Airy at home. She was seated by the door, and her face

beamed with delight the moment she saw me coming. All around her was a cloud of the most delicate lacework, to which she pointed with honest pride. 'It is real lace,' she said—'I hardly ever work on any of the common kind. Sometimes I have quite a fortune—that is, it would be to us poor folk—to make up here at home. Many and many a time I labour half the night to get the work done. The reason I am home so early to-day is because they have a special order in, and some of the medallions were here.'

'Airy,' said I, 'I have got something in my pocket that I hope will give you pleasure;' and I produced a writing.

'What is it, sir?' said she, colouring.

'Read it yourself,' said I.

While she was trying to read it the old man came hobbling up.

'Oh, father!' said Airy, trembling, 'I don't know, but I think it is—is it, sir?'

'Yes,' said I; 'it is a lease of the place for seven years, at one dollar the year.'

'Oh!' cried Airy, and in one moment she seized my hand and pressed two warm velvet lips on it. I felt them there ever so long afterward.

The old man blessed me as only the Irish can. Then came Mrs. Murphy, thanking me

with true eloquence. She prepared a sumptuous supper ; and I sat there like a king, and listened to Airy's music and songs.

Is it to be wondered at if, after this, I fairly haunted this humble abode? It is true, I tapped at the rocks with my hammer, and even put specimens into my bag, and made believe to the Murphys that they were worth their weight in gold. What a bundle of deceit I was !

One afternoon, as usual, I took my seat by the cottage. Airy was away ; but very soon she came bounding up the hill, her face flushed and her eyes flashing with excitement. She hardly noticed me as she passed into the house. Then there was a whispered conversation carried on within for a few minutes.

'She has got a letter,' said the old man to me, in the low, mysterious voice an Irishman puts on sometimes ; he added, with a wink, 'from Barney, ye know.'

This fell on me like a shower-bath. Who—what—was Barney? 'What, has she got a brother?' stammered I.

'Divil a one of her !'

Before I could question him further Airy came out and sat down in her accustomed seat near me. She was not so lively as usual, nor so free. I had just time to ask her if she was

feeling well, when Murphy called out 'Airy!' from his perch overhead. 'Sure,' he said, 'and isn't the boy himself coming up the hill ayont?' The blood came in a crimson flood to Airy's face and neck. She gave but one glance, that was enough, uttered a little scream of joy, and bounded off down the narrow path.

The only person in sight was a rather coarse-looking young fellow, in the dress of a mechanic. There was a glad smile on his broad, honest face as Airy rushed into his arms. She rested her head on his ample chest with the utmost confidence, as if it was nothing new for her to do.

I turned on my heel and went into the house, not to see the love-making. I felt a wish to melt out of creation.

I wanted to be quiet, and make a little arithmetical calculation of how great a fool I had been; but the old woman, with her sex's delight at the view of a courtship, began to expatiate, and told me, too late, all about Barney and Airy, and how he had left her for a year to make money; and, by his coming back, I might be sure he had succeeded, and there would be a wedding in these parts; and although, perhaps, Airy might have looked higher, yet he was an honest boy, and a sober, and a hard-working—Buzz! buzz! buzz!—and was, indeed, a blood-

relation, though somewhat distant : his great-aunt, Kate Slogan, had married Patrick O'Doolan ; and wasn't Pat O'Doolan the son of her man's great-grandfather by his first wife Norah ? which Norah was an O'Shaughnessy, like herself—Buzz ! buzz ! buzz !—I wished her at old Nick.

But keener torments were in store. In came Barney, and Airy hanging on him with a grace and an abandon I should have liked to sketch if it had been any other girl than this one. And this brute, Barney, had come home with money, and proceeded to regale us all with whisky purchased from the neighbouring store, and under its influence they all thawed but I ; and nobody made any secret of the approaching marriage ; and Barney, being informed of my goodness in procuring the lease, thanked me heartily, and rewarded me by saying that in that case he would build his cabin on the land ; he would not take Airy too far from her folk. This he confided to me in a half-whisper—to *me*. But quick ears heard, and he was repaid by a glance of infinite tenderness from Airy, and by the old man toasting him and his bride. Mrs. Murphy filled my glass to the brim, and I had to drink suburban whisky to that toast, so that I may say I have drunk poison to poison. The taste of that vile compound was on my tongue for days.

However, all the rest enjoyed themselves. The accordion was demanded. Airy sang and played, and after every song the old woman and Barney jumped up and danced with each other so grotesquely, yet merrily and nimbly, that I suppose I was the only man in creation who would not have been excessively amused.

I got up to go away; but Airy and Barney would insist upon convoying me to the road. Then they turned back together, happy as princes, and poor solitary I went home, feeling chilly and hollow.

Next day I took a long walk in a direction as opposite as possible to those fatal rocks, where I had enjoyed myself in a day-dream, and was now awakened rudely. I walked, and walked, and walked, and got into the country, and mounted a hill, and surveyed the beauties of nature with perfect dissatisfaction, inasmuch as the sea seemed to me a glaring looking-glass, the blue sky a vaulted monotony, and all the minor beauties cut out of stone. I walked home again, inexpressibly dull and dreary.

This was my life for some time; and then I got so mortified at my own folly that rage roused me. Weakness said, 'Go and take a look at her, at all events.' Self-deception said, 'Contemplate her with the eyes of art alone;

don't rob yourself of such a beautiful vision.' But mortified pride, and a grain of good sense, said, 'No ; the deeper you go, the worse for you. Out with the racking tooth and end the pain.'

I listened to the wise monitor. A month went by ; two months ; and I never went near the Murphys. Observing this, the devil turned postman and brought me a letter from Airy ; a sweet letter, in which she said that, my visits having ceased so suddenly, she feared I was offended, or perhaps I might be unwell. So she had been to her landlord, and learned my full name and address, and 'this came hoping' they had not done anything to offend me with their vulgar ways. Then she went on artlessly to say that Barney had been sent for to inherit some land and money in Ireland, and they looked to be rich ; but meantime she felt lonely. In short, it was a modest invitation to console her *during Barney's absence*. My pulses beat. It was a great temptation. I took my hat, and started for the fatal suburb.

But when I had got a little way, I lighted a cigar and thought it over. What was I going to do ? Cut Barney out, or suffer ten times more, on his return, than I had done.

I saw the trap. I turned into my club, and wrote a letter instead. I imitated the girl's frank-

ness. I told her that she was so charming I was afraid to visit her any more, for fear I should be more in love with her than I ought; that I had a sincere affection and esteem for her, and she must not think me less her friend that I did not visit her. I hoped she would never be in trouble; but, if she was, then I would come to her.

My virtue did not go to the length of not hoping for a reply to this.

But hers went the length of not sending one.

I had the sense to adhere to my resolution. I never wrote again to Airy. I never went near her.

But we were not to part on these terms. She crossed my path again when least I expected it.

It was, I think, about five weeks after my letter, that I stole out one day, feeling duller than usual, and, indeed, quite depressed. For one thing, the air was damp and chilly, and there was no sun. I lacked the vigour of mind to start on one of my excursions, and so wandered vaguely about. In such a frame of mind one ends by being drawn into the vortex, and by-and-by I found myself in the busiest part of Broadway. I mingled with the pedestrians on the sidewalk, but all at once my progress was obstructed. The dense mass of humanity had been stopped.



I peered over the nearest shoulders, but saw nothing. I asked what was the matter.

‘Oh, not much. Only a shop-girl in charge of a policeman.’

The policeman had signalled for a carriage.

It drew up, and he and his mate proceeded to lift the girl into it. Her limbs had failed her in the street.

They lifted her above the crowd, and in so doing they turned full upon me the face of Airy, beautiful as ever, but pale as death, and so rigid in its despair that it seemed cut out of marble.

Unable to get near her for the crowd, I could do nothing but make inquiries. But the people knew nothing. Thereupon I fell to guessing, and, as usual, my guesses were coloured by egotism. Something had happened to Barney McCabe, and Airy was wanted as a witness. Yes, he had been murdered in some bar-room riot. Poor fellow! What a pity! Airy was free.

I ordered my man to bring the morning papers up to my bedroom as soon as they could be got; and I searched them for news of the murder of the hapless McCabe, whom I had envied, and could now afford to pity. I did not find it—not for want of murders, for they were greatly in vogue that week; but there was no McCabe concerned in them, either actively or passively. In short, I

could find no trace of the crime I was looking for.

At last, in a corner of the police intelligence, I lighted on these words :

‘Yesterday a shop-girl in the employ of Small Brothers & Co. was arrested on a charge of stealing a large quantity of valuable lace.’

These words struck me, first feebly, then smartly, then violently. There was no name ; but the coincidences were so many and so strong. Airy was employed by that very house, was trusted with lace, and was arrested. Her face of terror rose again before me, and I sprang out of bed with a cry of dismay.

In a very short time I was being driven down town as fast as two blood horses could take me. I soon reached the prison where Airy was incarcerated. In spite of my appearance and respectability I soon found out that, not being a politician, I could do nothing with the pompous officials. I wanted to see Airy, and hear her version of the story before the Court opened. However, this was not allowed. The officers in charge of the prison seemed to be of opinion that my only object was to effect a rescue of some of their prisoners. A word, however, dropped from one of them gave me a hint. ‘Ef ye wur the prisoner’s lawyer, or in company with him, then

ye could be afther seeing her.' I saw the drift ; for while the officer was speaking a seedy-looking individual approached us. The latter stated to me, in a whisper, that he was a lawyer, and allowed to plead in court. He volunteered his services ; but I turned away from his red nose and whisky-perfumed breath in disgust.

The thing to be done was to find an honest lawyer. There was my nephew, George Barlow ; he, it is true, lacked experience, but I knew I could depend on his integrity.

In less than half an hour I was again at the prison, in company with George. There was no trouble now in gaining admittance to the cells. There a sight burst on my vision that I pray Heaven I may never witness again. Huddled together in every conceivable position along the corridors, waiting for their doom, was a promiscuous throng of the lowest dregs of humanity. There was a plentiful sprinkling of vile, pimple-faced wretches in the garb of womanhood, uttering such horrid blasphemies that my very blood ran cold. The bare memory of that sight makes my heart faint.

It was certainly a relief, after scrutinising the faces of the throng, to find Airy's was not among them.

But there was a female figure crouching apart

from those hardened sinners, and hiding her face entirely in her shawl.

Her shrinking from the others attracted my attention, and then I knew her at a glance, though I could not see her face.

I went up to her, and laid my hand gently on her shoulder, and spoke tenderly to her. She trembled all over directly, and looked up at me with a face so changed and colourless that I was scared almost out of my life. She seemed stunned, as if from a blow, and hardly to know me. When she at length roused herself she staggered to her feet, extending her hands toward me beseechingly.

Her first words were, 'Oh, Mr. Barlow, do they know? Please do not tell them that I am here! I would rather they thought me dead than have them to know I am in this horrid place!' Then she began to wring her hands and sob. 'I shall never, never be able to look in their honest old faces again! My heart is broken—I wish I could die! Oh, it was so cruel of them to put me here when I did not steal the lace! Indeed, sir, I tell the truth! Oh, sir, you believe me! I am so glad! so glad!'

Having relieved her mind, and knowing that she had a true friend in me, she began to cry, and quiver all over. I put my arm around her, for she seemed scarcely able to stand.

Her condition was now observed by some of her fellow-prisoners.

One horrid, blear-eyed woman brought her a cup of water and uttered a few words of rough consolation.

‘Sure, the creature is not used to the loikes. They have taken the wrong bird. This one niver did a wrong thing in her life.’

Then up tripped a girl, all draggled finery. ‘Never fear, she will soon get used to it. I was just as lamb-like as she is the first time I was sent up. Now I don’t care. It’s fun to get in here once in a while.’ She offered Airy her salts; but I shuddered when this woman’s bejewelled hand came near that modest face. She was far more to be feared in her tawdry finery than those of a lower order.

‘Airy,’ I said, as soon as she was calm, ‘you must tell my nephew here all about your case. He is a lawyer, and will be able to help you to establish your innocence.’

Airy’s story was quite simple, and, told in her straightforward way, easy enough to understand.

It seems that the firm of Small Brothers and Co. had from time to time missed valuable lace. Airy had been in the habit of taking the same kind of goods home to work. In this way the lace missed had been traced to her, and enough had been lost to make it a case of grand larceny.

My nephew listened attentively to Airy's story, carefully making notes of all she said.

Airy looked her thanks. Her heart seemed too full for words. It pained me more than I can tell to leave her.

Three o'clock was the hour appointed to hear the case. We were at the Court-house exactly to the minute. I was quietly following my nephew inside the railing when a pompous official pushed me roughly back. In spite of George's remonstrance I was forced to take a seat outside, while he, by virtue of his profession, took a seat inside. I was not aware at the time that a slight-of-hand movement from my pocket to that of the officer would have given me a free pass.

A dense throng of impatient people, both inside and outside the railings, were waiting to be heard. However, that important functionary to a trial—I mean the judge—was wanting. The hour was past, but still he came not.

‘Surely,’ I said to myself, ‘unless he is ill, the people ought not to be kept waiting.’

I little knew then what dirt under his feet he considered the people. However, after waiting half an hour we were relieved by the august presence.

That presence amazed me. The function of a judge is almost superhuman. Power so great

should be associated with wisdom, experience, and rare self-government ; and, in picturing a judge to one's self, one naturally imagines grey hairs, a profound brow, a calm eye, and an impressive dignity. In place of all this the State of New York gave us on this occasion a young man with a smooth face, a foppish air, and offensive manners. From first taking his seat in the judge's chair he showed an arrogance that was simply aggravating. One contemptuous glance round the court-room, then he began to sign warrants or some other legal documents. One thing I noticed very particularly, which was, that he never read the papers he signed. A wooden automaton would have done just as well ; it would have evinced as much interest in judicial business as did that fledgeling judge. Having pushed the last paper from him, he raised his steel-grey eyes and cast another piercing glance round the court-room. What a smile of conceit there was on his smooth, classical features ! The scum of the city were to be brought before him for trial—those who could not procure bail.

I often hear it said that one ought not to expect either dignity or decorum in a police-court. Perhaps this is right ; but then one might at least expect decency. Here unpunctuality and delay were followed by reckless haste. He could not come to time, but was in an alarming hurry to get

through. It took my breath away to watch the celerity with which he passed case after case.

The first prisoner was an innocent-looking German who could not speak English. He had stopped a car-horse, probably to prevent himself from being run over. There was no time for defence. The penalty came like a flash of lightning; it was ten days or ten dollars. 'See if he can understand that. Take him below! take him below!' from the judge.

As long as I live I shall never forget the look on that poor prisoner's face as he was being dragged out; he was simply stupefied.

The next case was an assault on an officer. The prisoner had evidently just slept off the effects of the fighting whisky he had imbibed, and felt ashamed of himself. He tried to conciliate the judge; he even flourished a handful of greenbacks in his face. It only hastened his doom: 'Six months, and a hundred dollars fine,' quicker than lightning. The prisoner wilted at once, and was about to beg for mercy, but the inevitable 'Take him below! take him below!' from the galloping judge prevented the least appeal.

The next defendant was a large, powerfully-built woman. Her face was bloated, with a monstrous lower jaw, over which the upper projected. Her lips were short and thick, leaving bare a



double row of gleaming dog-like teeth. A more hideous being of the human species I never saw in my life. This woman had committed an assault with a murderous weapon. The complainant, with the marks still on her face, stood ready with her witnesses. She was a patient, innocent-looking woman, evidently in the middle walk of life.

This was the first case that interested the Daniel of the police-court. He was no longer in a hurry, but listened patiently to the defendant's lawyer, who spoke in a confidential whisper in his ear.

‘That will do,’ said the judge, blandly. ‘The lady must find three hundred dollars bail, to appear at the General Sessions.’

‘But I am ready for trial,’ said the complainant. ‘My witnesses are all here, your honour. God help me! if she is let out on bail I am a dead woman!’

The youthful face of the judge puckered itself into a sneer at once. ‘You are not in a tenement house now, my good woman, that you need speak so loud. Go! The case is disposed of. Another word, and I will commit you for contempt.’

The furious gestures of the unjust judge frightened the poor woman. For her life she dared not utter another word. At the same time

I was a good deal surprised to see the ferocious defendant pass out of court unaccompanied by an officer.

‘That’s the last the Court will ever see of her,’ said a man at my elbow. Then he gave me the clew to this defeat of justice. That virago’s husband was a public man, being nothing less than an officer in the park. Beside this, he was a small politician, with great power at the polls in election time.

I could not help saying—of course to myself—‘So this is your galloping justice! Peccadilloes punished like crime, and crime let loose;’ and I fell into a little reverie.

I was roused by the grating voice of the galloping judge. Whilst I was reflecting the galloping judge was acting—after his kind. ‘Take her below!’ he cried. The prisoner he was so ready to dispose of was Airy. She was standing before the bar. She had just turned her head, and was casting an agonising look round the court-room. Her face had grown sharper and was more distinctly defined since morning. Her lips, usually so full and fresh, were now parched and shrivelled, like one in a fever. How slender and delicate she looked—how differing in every respect from the other prisoners I had seen there that afternoon! She might, in her

pitiful condition, have melted the heart of a stone ; but the only impression she made on the Court was to deepen the sneer on the aquiline features of the youthful judge.

My nephew did his best to delay the case but, not being a political power, little notice was taken of what he said.

‘This is a waste of time,’ said the judge. ‘She can’t find bail, so take her below.’

The officer laid his hand upon her shoulder.

I made a rush at the grating.

An officer pushed me roughly back. ‘Wait till your case is called.’

‘This is my case,’ I said. Then I roared to the judge, ‘I’m her bail, to any amount you like!’

The judge sneered, and said something in an undertone—complimentary, no doubt. But, for all that, in five minutes my name was to a bail-bond, and Airy was in a private room, crying with gratitude on my shoulder, and I was a happy man.

She pressed my hand eloquently, and we parted ; for her main thought was to run home and hide her face in her mother’s bosom.

I went to see her next day.

She was in bed.

Her father told me she had taken a chill in

the prison. Her mother said the chill was in her heart, to be so disgraced. Both the old people seemed quite stupefied with grief. They attached little value to the reprieve. Airy was accused. Airy would be tried, and doubtless condemned. What chance had she against 'Small Brothers?'

Absurd as it may appear, this was a revelation to me, and I returned home dejected. I sent for George and consulted him. He said the first thing we ought to do was to go to 'Small Brothers' and hear their story, and, by keeping our eyes and ears open, try to pick up some evidence, or at least some facts, to weaken or puzzle the evidence on the other side.

Next morning early we drove down Broadway, and my coachman reined up the horses in front of a marble palace. It was the store of 'Small Brothers & Co.' Broadway.

The judge was perfectly right in showing his contempt for such a worm as Airy. What was she in comparison to the 'Smalls,' who, no doubt, counted their wealth by millions?

The elder Small only was to be seen. We found him yawning over the morning paper, before a hot anthracite fire, in a sumptuously-furnished parlour detached from his store.

Mr. Small had a speculative eye—an eye that seemed to take no notice of outward things. The

words 'a selfish eye' will convey an idea of what I mean better than anything else. It was plain to see the hinge on which every movement of his mind turned, which was money. Bones, muscles, nerves, reputations, and even the human soul itself—all went for nothing when weighed against lucre.

I told him I came about Airy Murphy.

'Airy Murphy!' said Mr. Small. 'Who is that?'

'What!' I said, 'had you no hand in the arrest of the poor seamstress the day before yesterday?'

'Oh! I see. You mean the girl who stole the lace? You must consult my manager about her. I never bother my head about such trifles.'

'You call it a trifle, do you, to immure an innocent, lady-like girl in a prison, among the worst wretches ever thrown together in a great city?'

Mr. Small did not even deign to answer. He rose very deliberately, and went to the door and called 'Mr. Raffles!'

A tall, lean-looking man of thirty-five soon appeared.

'Mr. Raffles,' said Mr. Small to this person, 'these men are interested in the thief that stole

the lace. Mind they don't bully you,' he added, in his cool, aggravating way.

Mr. Raffles was comparatively polite; he said we should have to see the forewoman. We found that important functionary on the fourth floor of the building. She was presiding over at least a hundred neatly-dressed young ladies. They were all as busy as bees, and the hum of their machines was deafening. I looked in vain for one sloven among them. They were, one and all, genteel and lady-like in their deportment, and as like one another as new pins.

We were made acquainted with Mrs. Jenny, the forewoman, by Mr. Raffles. The lady was evidently Irish, if one might judge from her looks, and the slight tinge of the brogue on her tongue when speaking.

My nephew's first questions to the forewoman were as to the quantity of lace missing and the means used to fix the theft on Miss Murphy.

'We have lost thousands of dollars' worth,' said Mrs. Jenny. 'We never could have suspected Airy, only for the trap we set for her.'

'Ho, ho! So you set a trap for her, did you? May I be so bold as to ask the kind of trap you set?'

'Why, you see, it takes so many yards of lace to make a certain number of collars. For

weeks and weeks Airy has not returned the proper count. The number of yards in plain figures is first put down in our book, then in the work-girl's book, so that there can be no mistake.'

As she spoke, Mrs. Jenny produced two books. One belonged to the firm, while the other was Airy's. The moment I saw the latter's little dog-eared account-book, I considered her case lost. George, too, was staggered for a moment. Then he gave me a look, and asked to see a package of the lace.

Mrs. Jenny hesitated, and looked at Mr. Raffles.

'Better let them see it,' said he; 'he is her lawyer, you know.' I fancied, though, that Mrs. Jenny's hand trembled a little as she selected a small key from a number attached to her watch-chain; she was very slow in opening her desk, but at length a package of lace was produced. I was surprised when Raffles told us its value, and my heart sank within me when he said that it was just such material Miss Murphy had been in the habit of using.

'The figures on the package, I take it for granted,' said my nephew, 'describe the number of yards it contains?'

'To be sure,' said Mrs. Jenny, tartly. 'What else would they be for?'

Then she went on to explain the difference between ells Flemish and English yards.

My nephew took the package and examined it minutely; then, fixing his eye on Mrs. Jenny, he said, 'You will be able to swear in court, when the trial comes off, that this package of lace has never been tampered with since it left the hands of the manufacturer?'

'In course we can swear that; cannot we, Mr. Raffles?'

Mr. Raffles said, quietly, 'It will not be necessary for me to swear to that, Mrs. Jenny. Your oath will be sufficient.'

Thereupon my nephew seized a yard-measure that lay on the desk and began deliberately to count off the number of yards in the package. It was a trying moment, for we all knew that Airy's guilt or innocence depended on this test, to a certain extent. I hardly breathed while the monotonous 'One, two, three, four' of my nephew went on.

'Why, this package lacks over a yard to make up the number marked on the label.' George said this in a ringing voice, and his eyes flashed fire on the pair.

Mrs. Jenny turned red as fire, then white as the collar on her bovine neck, then red again; and, rousing her Irish courage, she expressed her-



self in a very unlady-like manner. My nephew, however, quickly stopped her.

‘It will be no good for you to bluster, madam. It is plain that your lace has been tampered with before ever it reached the hands of your workwoman Murphy.’

‘You have made a mistake, sir,’ said Raffles, in a bullying tone. ‘It is not so easy to measure lace as you think.’ As he spoke he took up the yard-measure with an air of confidence. It was rather comical, though, to see the blank look on his face when, being closely watched by George and me, he made out the same number of yards George had done.

‘That will do,’ I said. ‘Now let us go downstairs and see if Mr. Small can explain why there should be such a difference between the marks on his goods and their true measurement.’

I told the proprietor, sharply and decisively, the discovery we had made.

Mr. Small was taken aback. ‘Here’s a business,’ said he; ‘I don’t know what to do.’

‘Why, just go upstairs, and overhaul all the lace in your forewoman’s charge. You will very likely find more packages there short.’

Mr. Small recovered himself. ‘It seems to me,’ he said, ‘that you are taking quite an interest in my business.’

‘I take an interest in Miss Airy Murphy’s guilt or innocence. If it costs a thousand dollars to sift this matter to its foundation I will disburse it willingly, or ten times the sum,’ I said.

‘It is quite usual for old men to take an interest in unprotected seamstresses in this city,’ said Mr. Small in the most biting and sarcastic manner. I took no direct notice of the insult, but told him plainly that if he did not move in the matter I would publish the business. This threat had the desired effect. The great man at once led the way upstairs to the workroom. Had a hawk pounced upon a poultry-yard there could not have been greater consternation than when Small entered the room among his operators. No better proof was wanting in my mind that the man was a tyrant. The way those poor girls watched his every movement made my heart ache. No doubt they expected an example would be made, and the question with each was, whose mouth would next be deprived of bread?

We began at once to measure the lace in Mrs. Jenny’s charge, and piece after piece of the costly fabric was found deficient.

Both Raffles and Mrs. Jenny looked scared, while Small’s face was haggard, and he asked Mrs. Jenny, in a whining, helpless way, what it all meant.

‘It is plain enough, sir,’ said the woman, boldly, ‘some one about the premises must have false keys. Come to think of it, I have found the things in my desk pulled about more than once.’

Poor Small caught at his forewoman’s suggestion like a hungry fish at a baited hook. He drew himself up haughtily when my nephew intimated that the complaint against Miss Murphy ought to be withdrawn.

‘If the girl did not steal the lace it will be made plain enough at the trial,’ he said. ‘There is a thief somewhere about, and an example must be made of some one.’

‘But,’ I said, ‘it is as plain as the nose on your face that there is no dependence to be put on your figures. Why, then, put the poor girl to the disgrace of a trial, when she has suffered so much already?’

This reference to his nose, which was a preposterous one, brought Mr. Small’s patience to a climax.

‘You must leave me to manage my own affairs,’ he said. ‘Good-day!’

I was about to remonstrate, but he turned to Raffles, and roared, in a voice that was heard all over the room, ‘Show these impertinent fellows out. If they do not go at once, call an officer.’

Of course there was no alternative left for us now but to go.

Raffles and Mrs. Jenny stood grinning as we walked away, evidently well pleased with their victory.

‘Dine with me,’ said I to George, ‘and, meantime, think it over.’

After dinner we went into it. George said, ‘Small is in the power of the manager and his forewoman. He hardly dare call his soul his own in their presence.’

‘You don’t think, then, that Airy has had anything to do with burglars?’

‘The only burglars that have ever entered the place are Mrs. Jenny and Raffles.’

‘But what is to be done?’

‘Oh, I’m clear on that. We must have them shadowed.’

‘Shadowed?’

‘Set detectives on ’em both.’

‘I’ll shadow the vagabonds,’ I said, emphatically; ‘I don’t care what it costs. Poor little Airy!’

So I gave George the wherewithal to employ as many detectives as he thought proper, and inside of ten days the following was the result:

Mrs. Jenny was carrying on a branch lace factory up-town under an assumed name. The

lace used was the same as that imported by Small Brothers and Co. The forewoman was seen carrying home from the store, almost every night, very suspicious-looking little packages.

One night, after due consideration and misgivings, we took a liberty with the law and seized one of these parcels. It contained rich lace. We took it to Mr. Small's private house. He recognised it as his, and was ungrateful to us, but vowed vengeance on the thieves; but they were beforehand with him. Next morning they got into the store two hours before his time, and levanted with property worth ten thousand dollars.

The thieves being so manifestly declared, we again applied to Small Brothers to withdraw the charge against Airy Murphy.

This elicited human perversity. Small senior elected to say to himself, not that I was his benefactor on a grand scale, present and future, but that I, by meddling, had driven the thieves to levant with a large booty, whereas he would have managed matters better if I had let him alone. So, to spite me, he refused to withdraw the charge.

Upon this I consulted George no more, but laid it before certain literary friends of mine. The result was that one morning an interesting article appeared in a powerful journal, relating

the facts, and putting all the great houses on their guard, and promising fresh disclosures.

Two hours after publication, comes by messenger a mighty submissive letter from Small senior, engaging to withdraw the charge against Murphy—so he designated that injured angel—and begging me to let the affair drop.

I sent George a line, 'Small has caved,' and drove like the wind with the good news to Airy.

I found the old people seated by the fire, and Barney McCabe, with his head in his hands, at the window.

All three seemed stupid with woe.

'Come, cheer up, it is all right,' said I. 'I've good news for you: the charge is withdrawn. The real thieves are found out. Airy is free.'

'God bless you, sir!' said Barney. 'Ye've cleared her good name, anyway.'

But the old people received it like nothing at all. 'It is little that matters now,' said Mrs. Murphy. 'Shure *we* always knew the darling was no thief. We thank you all the same, sorr. Ye were always a good frind to her and to uz.'

A horror seized me. I began to fear Airy was dead.

'Is she—ill?' said I.

'Is she ill?' cried the mother, despairingly.

Then she gravely opened a cupboard, and took out a large paper parcel pinned together, and put it on my lap.

I undid it, and stared at the contents—a woman's abundant hair. There was no mistaking it; it was Airy's glorious hair all cut off. I was affected to tears.

That set the mother off, you may be sure, and we mingled our tears over the piteous sight.

'Don't tell me she is no more!' I cried, piteously.

'No, sir, she is not dead intirely,' said the old man. 'But the faver is strong, too strong for the cracher intirely. Them that took her to prison they took her to her grave.'

Somehow I have made a few friends in each profession; and amongst the rest a physician, young, but able, who is capable of putting himself out of the way a very little to oblige me.

I told him Airy's case, and handed her over to his care. He was to visit her every day, and send me the bill. He was also to let me have a short bulletin every day.

His first report let me know that the patient was in imminent danger, but that this might be partly owing to the treatment—it had been all wrong. He had ordered her bark and port-wine, &c.

I sent him a sharp reply. 'If you value my friendship don't *order* her things in that out-of-the-way place, but take them to her.'

In the course of a day or two, to my great joy, he recorded an improvement, but threw out a mysterious hint that there was something else in danger besides the patient's life.

'Never mind that,' said I. 'You save her life. I ask no more.'

Three days after this I received a dry note from him.

'I consider the patient, Airy Murphy, out of danger; and, since that is all you require, I now retire from the case until further orders.'

My joy at this missive was so great, I paid little attention to his innuendo.

That very day I visited the Irish colony, and, to my delight, I found Airy down-stairs. Barney had made her a sort of couch, and she lay on it.

Her face was deadly pale, but as lovely as ever. Her mother had made her a little cap; and I ceased, on the spot, to wonder, as I used, that fifty years ago girls wore caps. She was lovelier in this cap than pen can describe. But her eyes! They seemed now preternaturally large, and as beautiful as ever, but their expression vague and unintelligible.



I spoke to her ; she smiled, and stared, but did not know me.

Her mother begged me not to be offended, for the cracher did not know any of them.

The old people, however, were now resigned. Death had spared her. To be sure, her mind was away. But she was alive ; and her reason might come back one day or other ; she was so young.

To me, on the contrary, the sight of this sweet girl's body without her mind was inexpressibly painful, and I went away very soon.

However, I came back in two days, and found all the party there, and now much distressed at Airy's condition. They had, no doubt, been trying in every way to revive her recollection, for when I came, they said, 'Shure, it is Mr. Barlow. D'ye hear that, darlint? This is Mr. Barlow himself, that got ye out of the prison. God bless him for that same !'

She gave no sign of intelligence.

We were all at our wit's end, as the saying is what to do with her.

At last I had a bright idea.

'The accordion !' I cried.

It was brought me directly, and I began to play a favourite air of hers, called 'Ireland's Music.'

As I played, we all kept our eyes on her sweet face, and it was like stirring the waters of a lake. The deep, unmeaning eyes began to cloud and brighten by turns, and to be ruffled just like pools. Ideas seemed struggling, though without success ; but still they showed their existence, however unable to rise to the light.

I played on, till a sweet, piteous smile came to her face, and at last her eyes slowly filled and two tears ran down.

Then I left off. But we could all see that it had done her good.

This experiment was so interesting and so charming that I came again next evening and brought some music. I played several melodies with the happiest results.

By-and-by I put the accordion into her hands and guided her fingers. She laughed, or rather crowed, like a child, well pleased at the sound.

But not a tune could she remember by herself, only little bits of tunes.

This went on for some nights, and always with an imperceptible advance ; she began to murmur words, not very consecutively.

At last we got her round to play some of her own tunes, and then her progress was more rapid.

She recognised her father and mother first, and me next.

She said, demurely, 'This is Mr. Barlow ; he loves me, and I love him.' Which was rather a pill for Barney McCabe there present.

I felt inflated ; but affected to laugh it off.

Mrs. Murphy apologised. I told her demurely there was no offence.

I thought, of course, that would pass over ; but the next time I was there she made me a declaration of love before them all, and gave her reasons.

'I was in prison,' said she ; 'they accused me of—of—murdering children, I believe. No matter. He was the one that took me out—and he can play. You can't, not one of you.' She swept them all with a disdainful glance.

'Play me a tune,' said she suddenly to me, not at all in a loving tone, but very sharp and peremptory.

I smiled, and I did as I was bid, and as I played she bent her lovely eyes on me with such a passionate devotion that they thrilled me through and through.

I began to get alarmed, and to remember the illusions I had already nourished, and what they had cost me.

I discontinued my visits, and sent my servant now and then to inquire. He came back with messages which had, probably, some little mean-

ing as delivered to him, but he relieved them of it on the road.

At last, one fine day, who should call on me but Barney McCabe, dressed in his best.

His errand was a strange one. He soon let me know it—it was to hand his sweetheart over to me.

‘It is you she loves now,’ said he, sullenly.

‘Nonsense, Barney!’ said I, swelling internally like a turkey-cock. ‘You know she is not in her right mind.’

‘She wasn’t when you seen her last,’ said he; ‘but we think she is now. She stands to it, you are the man for her. You took her out of the prison; and she says you love her, and the old people think so too. So I won’t stand in the way. You are a good man and a rich man, and proved yourself a friend in time of need; and I’m only a poor fellow, and I was out of the way at the time, worse luck. I was away to get money for her, too; but the cracher can’t see that. Well, I’ve loved her, man and boy, and I’d die for her good. But the heart’s its own master. I’ll never complain; but I’m not the colleen’s slave, neither. “There are as good fish in the sea.” I’ll never love another as I love Airy; but I don’t want to marry any girl to have it flung in my face that she loved another man better.’

‘Yes; but,’ said I, ‘I don’t choose to come between an honest man and his sweetheart.’

‘What signifies that, if I consent?’ said this sensible young man. ‘Anyway, do come and see her; for she sits and cries by the hour because you don’t come near her.’

All this, and more, said Barney McCabe, with Irish turns of phrase I cannot undertake to repeat.

‘Well,’ said I, ‘*to oblige you* I will come, if it is only to convince you this is a misunderstanding.’

Barney thanked me in a dogged sort of way, very unlike gratitude, and went his way.

As for me, conscience held me back; affection and gratified vanity pulled me on.

I elected to go; but I was ashamed to hurry. I coquetted with the situation.

Now, coquetting with your desires is a practice I cannot recommend to men in their dealings with women. Women coquet with their own wishes; and for that very reason *we* ought never to do it, because women, somehow, always punish a man if he plays the woman.

However, I went at last to accept my conquest.

I found her sitting on Barney’s knee, lavishing divine caresses on his commonplace mug and curly hair.

She started, sitting, but did not even get off his knee. She only blushed like a rose, and put out her hand to me.

‘Forgive me, sir,’ said she. ‘They tell me I have been talking sad nonsense about you,’ and she buried her face on Barney’s shoulder.

‘Oh, bother!’ said the old woman. ‘Ye needn’t be hiding your head for that, mavourneen. Shure a friend in need is a friend indeed; and the jintleman was your friend in throuble, and gratitude doesn’t measure its words, and why would it? The Lord bless him! the Saints bless him! and the holy Virgin watch over him, for his goodness to my colleen!’

Hitherto I had stood benumbed. Now I caught at the old woman’s words, and put the best face on it I could.

‘I am most happy to have been of service to you,’ said I, ‘and I hope you will always look on me as a friend.’

I closed the interview as quickly as possible, and went away superficially serene, and sick at heart.

It has been my good fortune through life that I have always had the inclination, and also—by no merit of my own—the means, to turn my back on trouble.

So I left New York, and made a sort of artis-

tical progress through the principal cities of the States, prying into all instructive things except lovely women.

On my return next year I found a young woman had called on me more than once, and given her name, Mrs. McCabe. Besides her name, she had, on one occasion, left some flowers and fruit.

I made inquiries, and found her husband had bought a market-garden, and that they sold the produce, and also poultry, in New York on certain days.

I had a wish to see her ; but, true to my line of self-defence, I resisted it manfully.

She had been married nearly two years before I cast eyes on her again.

One glorious September day she called on me in a vehicle. She was driving it ; it was neither a cart nor a gig, but between the two, and filled with produce.

I came down to her, for she was alone, and could not leave her pony.

Her beauty had ripened, and she was a glorious woman ; only she was Hebe no more, but Pomona, and the finer bloom of poetry had left her buxom face and her hands, living two years with that clod, and nearly always out in the air.

Her honest eyes glistened at sight of me ; and

she welcomed me home, and forced on me a basket of muscatel grapes, each one large as a walnut, and an incredible pumpkin.

Well I had earned them, for I had not only done, but suffered.

We shook hands, and she drove away ; and I felt at the time, as I feel now, that I ought then and there to fall into a train of reflections salutary to myself, and, if published, beneficial to mankind.

But 'ought goes for nothing,' and 'the truth is the truth.' So what I really did say to myself, word for word, and syllable for syllable, was this:

'Well, she is considerably sunburnt—*that's one comfort,*'



## *A STROKE OF BUSINESS.*

A BELGIAN nobleman had a female friend who was dear to him, very.

She envied the equipage of a rival beauty, and was inconsolable by words. So he bought her an elegant calèche, and a pair of Hanoverian steppers; and, that she might not only equal but surpass and afflict the rival, who had so afflicted her, he threw in a negro coachman. Him—as black is an excellent background, especially for gold—he blazoned and bedizened sore. The fair exulted, the darkey was inflated almost to bursting.

But gratitude and affection are not so easy to purchase as horses, carriages, and coachmen; so the lady was fickle; and, as female friends will tell of each other, my lord was put on his guard. He took various measures to learn the truth. His agents discovered enough to increase his suspicions, but not enough to bring the matter home. So he determined to try his own hand. One day that *pulchra* had ordered the carriage unusually early, he pleaded business and left the

house: but he went no farther than the stable-yard. He got hold of Cæsar, and, with his help, blackened his face, curled and darkened his hair, and put on the darkey's livery. Cæsar complimented him on the improvement in his appearance. He started that vain mortal for a promenade in his clothes, and himself drove the carriage to the door and blazed on the box.

After a weary wait the fair emerged in a walking costume, and took her place in the carriage, telling the sham Cæsar, haughtily, which shop to drive to first.

She went from one shop to another, and showed the inquiring spirit on the box how time can be killed and yet money wasted.

*Ennui* crept gradually into the place of suspicion, and was the less tolerable of the two.

At last she relieved his weariness, and renewed his excitement by drawing the check-string at a young man.

The young man, who had evidently been waiting a weary while for her unpunctual, brightened up and came to the carriage: a fair hand was given him, kissed, and held fast, and then commenced the game of eager petition and feigned refusal; all before the door of a famous shop with a back issue.

It ended in the lady being persuaded to

descend and place herself entirely under the protection and safeguard of this young gentleman—a Mentor whose qualifications as ‘a director’ the disguised proprietor on the box happened to know too well.

‘You can drive home, Cæsar,’ said the fair, with perfect nonchalance.

A coachman must obey orders, so my lord drove home. But first he did a little stroke of business on his own account; he lifted his whip high, gave two hearty slashes, one to the fair one’s cheek, the other to her lover’s nose, and venting the rest of his feelings on the horses, went home like mad.

He drove straight to the stable yard, and there found Cæsar in an ill humour too. Strolling on the boulevard in his master’s clothes, this worthy had counted on admiration and conquests. Instead of that he had encountered ill-bred ridicule, and had strutted home disgusted. He now begged his master to give him back his sensible clothes and resume these ridiculous garments that made people laugh even when Cæsar strutted within.

‘You need not fear,’ said his master, bitterly. ‘I will never wear these cursed things of yours again; one learns the truth in them.’

He washed his face, and dirtied a bucketful of water to do it; resumed his toggery, and told

Cæsar that in future he was to drive nobody but *him*.

Cæsar assented with gratified pride.

The lady came home, was very ill, sank on a couch, and, through her maid, demanded an interview with her insulter.

Her insulter declined that honour; for he knew by experience that she would scold, storm, lament, confess half, weep, melt and manipulate him; so he 'shunned that lovely snare.'

Then she broke a tumbler and two Dresden plates, and sent for a doctor—the youngest for miles round—and took to her bed. Long linen dress with lace eight inches deep, bewitching cap, quart of eau-de-Cologne.

My lord retorted by selling the furniture of the other rooms, and stipulating for its prompt removal.

While he thus indulged his spleen came a letter, the terms almost as magnificent as the construction was ungrammatical; it was from Cæsar, who had heard all from the lady's maid, and more from a gossiping journal.

Cæsar's remonstrance translated into English appeared rational. 'You can whip little Missy in doors, and in your own name,' said he, 'and if you whip her every time she deserves it, you will have a harder place than any of your servants

have, the lazy trash—except me. But when you are wearing my clothes, and painted my colour, and seated on my box, you have no right to whip a lady publicly, because it is not the fashion here ; and all the white trash will say “ Cæsar is ungentleel ; he whips the ladies.” ’

The nobleman, on receiving this, sent his lacquey out to buy a dog-whip ; and when he had got it he proceeded to the stables in search of a dignified darkey.

But Cæsar, either from native dignity or servile apprehensicn, had deposited his livery and retired, and next morning sent my lord his *congé* from a respectful distance.

So here was, in every sense, a good stroke of business. The Belgian noble dismissed the faithless fair, and the African darkey discharged the Belgian noble.

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## *WHAT HAS BECOME OF LORD CAMELFORD'S BODY?*

THIS question comes not from an Old Bailey counsel squeezing a witness ; 'tis but a mild inquiry addressed to all the world, because the world contains people who can answer it ; but I don't know where to find them.

To trace a gentleman's remains beyond the grave would savour of bad taste and Paul Pry ; but I am more reasonable—I only want to trace those remains into a grave, if they have reached one.

Even that may seem impertinent curiosity to his descendants ; but if it is impertinent it is natural. To permit the world a peep at strange facts and then drop the curtain all in a moment, is to compel curiosity ; and this has been done by Lord Camelford's biographers. To leave his lordship's body for seven or eight years in a dust-hole of St. Anne's Church, packed up—in the largest fish-basket ever seen—for exportation, but not ex-

ported—is also to compel curiosity ; and this has been done by his lordship's executors.

Now, this last éccentric fact has come to me on the best authority, and, coupled with the remarkable provisions for his interment made by Camelford himself, has put me into such a state that there is no peace nor happiness for me until I can learn what has become of Lord Camelford's body—fish basket and all.

I naturally wish to reduce as many sensible people as I can to my own intellectual standard *in re* Camelford. I plead the fox who, having lost his tail—as I my head—was for decaudating the vulpine species directly.

To this bad end, then, I will relate briefly what is public about Lord Camelford, and next what is known only to me and three or four more outside his own family.

Eccentricity in person, he descended from a gentleman who did, at least, one thing without a known parallel : he was grandson, or great-grandson, of Governor Pitt.

I beg pardon on my knees, but being very old and infirm and in my dotage, and therefore almost half as garrulous as my juvenile contemporaries, I really must polish off the governor first. He had a taste for and knowledge of precious stones. An old native used to visit him periodically and tempt



him with a diamond of prodigious size. I have read that he used to draw it out of a piece of fusty wool and dazzle his customer. But the foxy governor kept cool and bided his time. It came: the merchant one day was at low-water and offered it cheaper. Pitt bought it; and this is said to be the only instance of an Anglo-Saxon outwitting a Hindoo in stones. The price is variously printed—man being a very inaccurate animal at present—but it was not more than 28,000*l*. Pitt brought it home, and its fame soon rang round Europe. A customer offered—the Regent of France: price, 135,000*l*. But France at that time was literally bankrupt. The representative of that great nation could not deal with this English citizen except by the way of deposit and instalment. Accordingly, a number of the French crown-jewels were left in Pitt's hands, and four times a year the French agents met him at Calais with an instalment, until the stone was cleared and the crown-jewels restored.

Thenceforth the Pitt diamond was called the Regent diamond. It is the second stone in Europe, being inferior to the Orloff, but superior in size to the Koh-i-noor; for it was from the first a trifle larger, and the Koh-i-noor, originally an enormous stone, was fearfully cut down in Hindostan, and of

late years has been terribly reduced in Europe—all the better for the Amsterdam cutters.

Every great old stone has cost many a life in some part of the world or other. But in Europe their vicissitudes are mild; only the Sancy has done anything melodramatic.<sup>1</sup> The Regent has always gone quietly along with France. No Bourbon took it into exile at the first Revolution; no Republican collared it. Napoleon set it in his sword-hilt, but it found its way back to the royal family who originally purchased it, from them to the Second Emperor, and again to this Republic. I am afraid if I had been Bony I should have yielded to etymology, and boned it before I went on my travels. But delicacy prevailed, and it has only run one great risk. In 1848 it lay a week in a ditch of the Champ de Mars, after the sack of the Tuileries, but was given up at last under a

<sup>1</sup> The Sancy, a beautiful pear-shaped diamond of, say, fifty-three carats, was first spoken of in the possession of Philip, Duke of Burgundy. Very likely he imported it, for he dealt habitually with the East for curiosities. It passed, after some generations, to a Portuguese prince. He wanted to raise money on it, and sent it to Paris, instructing the messenger to swallow it if he found himself in trouble or danger. It did not reach Paris, and this news was sent to Portugal. The French authorities were applied to, and they searched diligently and found a foreigner had been assassinated and buried in a French village. They exhumed him, opened him, and found the Sancy in his stomach. The stone was purchased by James the Second, and afterward was in various French hands. I think it has now gravitated to the Rothschilds.

happy illusion that it was unsaleable. As if it could not have been broken up and the pieces sold for 100,000*l.*! The stone itself is worth 800,000*l.*, I am told.

From the importer of this diamond descended a Mr. Pitt, who was made a peer in 1784. He had a son, Thomas, born in 1775, to astonish his contemporaries while he lived and torment one with curiosity seventy years after his death.

Thomas Pitt, Lord Camelford, was a character fit for the pen of Tacitus or Clarendon: a singular compound of virtues and vices, some of which were directly opposed, yet ruled him by turns; so that it was hard to predict what he would do or say on any given occasion; only the chances were it would be something with a strong flavour, good or bad.

In his twenty-nine years—which is only nine years of manhood—he assassinated an unresisting man, and set off to invade a great and warlike nation single-handed; wrenched off many London door-knockers; beat many constables; fought a mob, single-handed, with a bludgeon, and was cudgelled and rolled in the gutter without uttering a howl; mauled a gentleman without provocation, and had 500*l.* to pay; relieved the necessities of many, and administered black eyes to many. He was studious and reckless, scientific and hare-

brained ; tender-hearted, benevolent, and barbarous ; unreasonably vindictive and singularly forgiving ; he lived a humorous ruffian, with flashes of virtue, and died a hero, a martyr, and a Christian.

To those who take their ideas of character from fiction alone, such a sketch as this must seem incredible, for fiction is forced to suppress many of the anomalies that nature presents. David was even more unlike David than Camelford varied from Camelford ; and the chivalrous Joab, who dashed, with his life in his hand, into the camp of the Philistines to get his parched general and king a cup of water, afterward assassinated a brother soldier in a way so base and dastardly as merited the gibbet, and the lash to boot. Imagine a fellow hanging in chains by the road-side with the Victoria Cross upon his bosom, both cross and gibbet justly earned ! Such a man was, in his day, the son of Zeruiah.

Were fiction to present such bold anomalies they would be dubbed inconsistencies, and Horace would fly out of his grave at our very throats, crying :

Amphora cœpit  
Institui, currente rotâ cur urceus exit.

It is all the more proper that the strange characters of history should be impressed on the

mind, lest, in our estimate of mankind, men's inconsistencies should be forgotten, and puzzle us beyond measure some fine day when they turn up in real life.

Lord Camelford went to school first at a village of the Canton Berne in Switzerland, and passed for a thoughtful boy; thence to the Charterhouse. He took a fancy to the sea and was indulged in it; at fourteen years old he went out as midshipman in the 'Guardian' frigate, bound for Botany Bay with stores. She met with disasters, and her condition was so desperate that the captain (Riou) permitted the ship's company to take to the boats. He himself, however, with a fortitude and a pride British commanders have often shown in the face of death, refused to leave the ship. Then Camelford and ninety more gallant spirits stood by him to share his fate. However, they got the wreck—for such she is described—by a miracle, to the Cape, and Camelford went home in a packet.

Next year, 1791, he sailed with Vancouver in the 'Discovery.' But on this voyage he showed insubordination, and Vancouver was obliged to subject him to discipline. He got transferred to the 'Resistance,' then cruising in the Indian seas, and remained at sea till 1796, when his father died, and he returned home to take his estates and title.

Though years had elapsed, he could not forgive Captain Vancouver, but sent him a challenge. Vancouver was then retired, and in poor health. The old captain appealed to the young man's reason, and urged the necessity of discipline on board a ship-of-war, but offered to submit the case to any flag-officer in the Navy, and said that if the referee should decide this to be a question of honour, he would resign his own opinion and go out with Lieutenant Camelford.

Camelford, it is to be feared, thought no sane officer would allow a duel on such grounds; for he did not accept the proposal, but waited his opportunity, and meeting Vancouver in Bond Street, insulted him, and tried to strike him. The mortification and humiliation of this outrage preyed upon Vancouver's heart, and shortened the life of a deserving officer and very distinguished navigator.

Little more than a year after this, Camelford took a very different view of discipline, and a more sanguinary one. Yet there was one key to these discordant views—his own egotism.

Peers of the realm rose fast in the King's service at that date, and Camelford, though only a lieutenant, soon got a command; now it so happened that his sloop, the 'Favourite,' and a larger vessel, the 'Perdrix,' Captain Fahie, were both

lying in English Harbour, Antigua, on January 13, 1798. But Fahie was away at St. Kitt's, and Peterson, first lieutenant, was in charge of the 'Perdrix.' Lord Camelford issued an order which Peterson refused to obey, because it affected his vessel, and he represented Fahie, who was Camelford's senior. There were high words, and, no doubt, threats on Camelford's part, for twelve of Peterson's crew came up armed. It is not quite clear whether Peterson sent for them; but he certainly drew them up in line and bared his own cutlass. Camelford immediately drew out his marines, and ranged them in a line opposite Peterson's men. He then came up to Peterson with a pistol, and said, 'Lieutenant Peterson, do you still persist in not obeying my orders?'

'Yes, my lord,' said Peterson, 'I do persist.'

Thereupon Camelford put his pistol to Peterson's very breast, and shot him dead on the spot. He fell backward and never spoke nor moved.

Upon this bloody deed the men retired to their respective ships, and Camelford surrendered to Captain Matson, of the 'Beaver' sloop, who put him under parole arrest. He lost little by that, for the populace of St. John's wanted to tear him to pieces. A coroner's jury was summoned, and gave a cavalier verdict that Peterson 'lost his

life in a mutiny,' the vagueness of which makes it rather suspicious.

Camelford was then taken in the 'Beaver' sloop to Martinique, and a court-martial sat on him, by order of Rear-Admiral Hervey. The court was composed of the five captains upon that station, viz., Cayley, Brown, Ekers, Burney, and Mainwaring, and the judgment was delivered in these terms, after the usual preliminary phrases: 'The court are unanimously of opinion that the very extraordinary and manifest disobedience of Lieutenant Peterson to the lawful commands of Lord Camelford, the senior officer at English Harbour, and his arming the ship's company, were acts of mutiny highly injurious to His Majesty's service; the court do therefore unanimously adjudge that Lord Camelford be honourably acquitted.'

Such was the judgment of sailors sitting in a secret tribunal. But I think a judge and a jury, sitting under the public eye, and sitting next day in the newspapers, would have decided somewhat differently.

Camelford was the senior officer in the harbour; but Peterson, in what pertained to the 'Perdrix,' was Fahie, and Fahie was not only Camelford's senior, but his superior in every way, being a post-captain.

'Lieutenant' is a French word, with a clear



meaning, which did not apply to Camelford, but did to Peterson—*lieu tenant*, or *locum tenens* : I think, therefore, Peterson had a clear right to resist in all that touched the ‘Perdrix,’ and that Camelford would never have ventured to bring him to a court-martial for mere disobedience of that order. In the court-martial Camelford is called a commander ; but that is a term of courtesy, and its use, under the peculiar circumstances, seems to indicate a bias : like the man he slaughtered, he had only a lieutenant’s grade.

Much turns, however, on the measure and manner even of a just resistance : and here Peterson was *primâ facie* to blame. But suppose Camelford had threatened violence ! The thing looks like an armed defence, not a meditated attack. For the lieutenant in command of the ‘Favourite’ to put a pistol to the breast of the lieutenant in charge of the ‘Perdrix,’ and slaughter him like a dog, when the matter could have been referred on the spot by these two lieutenants to their undoubted superiors, was surely a most rash and bloody deed. In fact, opinion in the navy itself negatived the judgment of the court-martial. So many officers, who respected discipline, looked coldly on this one-sided disciplinarian, Camelford, that he resigned his ship and retired from the service soon after.

## THE CAPRICCIOS OF CAMELFORD.

It was his good pleasure to cut a rusty figure in his Majesty's service. He would not wear the epaulets of a commander, but went about in an old lieutenant's coat, the buttons of which, according to one of his biographers, 'were as green with verdigris as the ship's bottom.' He was a Tartar, but attentive to the comforts of the men, and very humane to the sick. He studied hard in two kinds—mathematical science and theology; the first was to make him a good captain; the second to enable him to puzzle the chaplains, who in that day were not so versed in controversy as the Jesuit fathers.

Returning home, with Peterson's blood on his hands, he seems to have burned to recover his own esteem by some act of higher courage than shooting a brother officer *à bout portant*; and he certainly hit upon an enterprise that would not have occurred to a coward. He settled to invade France, single-handed, and shoot some of her rulers, *pour encourager les autres*. He went to Dover and hired a boat. He was sly enough to say at first he was bound for Deal; but after a bit, says our adventurer, in tones appropriately light and cheerful, 'Well, no, on second thoughts,

let us go to Calais ; I have got some watches and muslins I can sell there.' Going to France in that light and cheerful way was dancing to the gallows ; so Adams, skipper of the boat, agreed with him for 10*l.*, but went directly to the authorities. They concluded the strange gentleman intended to deliver up the island to France, so they let him get into the boat, and then arrested him. They searched him, and found him armed with a brace of pistols, a dagger, and a letter of introduction in French.

They sent him up to the Privy Council, and France escaped invasion that bout.

At that time, as I have hinted, it was a capital crime to go to France from England ; so the gallows yearned for Camelford. But the potent, grave, and reverend seniors of his Majesty's Council examined him, and advised the King to pardon him under the royal seal. They pronounced that ' his only motive had been to render a service to his country.' This was strictly true, and it was unpatriotic to stop him ; for whoever fattens the plains of France with a pestilent English citizen, or consigns him to a French dungeon for life, confers a benefit on England, and this benefit Camelford did his best to confer on his island home. It was his obstructors who should have been hung. His well-meant endeavour

reminds one of the convicts' verses, bound for Botany Bay :

True patriots we, for, be it understood,  
We left our country for our country's good.

The nation that had retained him against his will now began to suffer for its folly, by his habitual breaches of the public peace.

After endless skirmishes with the constables, my lord went into Drury Lane Theatre, with others of the same kidney, broke the windows in the boxes, and the chandeliers, and Mr. Humphries's head. Humphries had him before a magistrate. Camelford lied, but was not believed, and then begged the magistrate to ask Mr. Humphries if he would accept an apology ; but word-ointment was not the balm for Humphries, who had been twice knocked down the steps into the hall, and got his eye nearly beaten out of his head. He prepared an indictment, but afterward changed his tactics judiciously, and sued the offender for damages. The jury, less pliable than captains in a secret tribunal, gave Humphries a verdict and 500*l.* damages.

After this, Camelford's principal exploits appear to have been fights with the constables, engaged in out of sport, but conducted with great spirit by both parties, and without a grain of ill-will on either side. He invariably rewarded their valour

with gold when they succeeded in capturing him. When they had got him prisoner, he would give the constable of the night a handsome bribe to resign his place to him. Thus promoted, he rose to a certain sense of duty, and would admonish the delinquents with great good sense and even eloquence, but spoiled all by discharging them. Such was his night-work. In the daytime he was often surprised into acts of unintentional charity and even of tender-heartedness.

#### HIS NAME A TERROR TO FOPS.

He used to go to a coffee-house in Conduit Street, shabbily dressed, to read the paper. One day a dashing beau came into his box, flung himself down on the opposite seat, and called out in a most consequential tone, 'Waitaa, bring a couple of wax candles and a pint of Madeira, and put them in the next box.' *En attendant* he drew Lord Camelford's candles toward him, and began to read. Camelford lowered at him, but said nothing.

The buck's candles and Madeira were brought, and he lounged into his box to enjoy them. Then Camelford mimicked his tone, and cried out, 'Waitaa, bring me a pair of snuffaa.' He took the snuffers, walked leisurely round into the

beau's box, snuffed out both the candles, and retired gravely to his own seat. The buck began to bluster, and demanded his name of the waiter.

‘Lord Camelford, sir.’

‘Lord Camelford! What have I to pay?’ He laid down his score, and stole away without tasting his Madeira.

### HIS PLUCK.

When peace was proclaimed, this suffering nation rejoiced. Not so our pugnacious Peer. He mourned alone—or rather cursed, for he was not one of the sighing sort. London illuminated. Camelford's windows shone dark as pitch. This is a thing the London citizens always bitterly resent. A mob collected, and broke his windows. His first impulse was to come out with a pistol and shoot all he could; but luckily he exchanged the fire-arm for a formidable bludgeon. With this my lord sallied out, single-handed, and broke several heads in a singularly brief period. But the mob had cudgels too, and belaboured him thoroughly, knocked him down, and rolled him so diligently in the kennel, while hammering him, that at the end of the business he was just a case of mud with sore bones.

All this punishment he received without a

single howl, and it is believed would have taken his death in the same spirit; so that, allowing for poetic exaggeration, we might almost say of him :

He took a thousand mortal wounds  
As mute as fox 'midst mangling hounds.

The next night his windows were just as dark; but he had filled his house with 'boarders,' as he called them, viz., armed sailors; and had the mob attacked him again, there would have been wholesale bloodshed, followed by a less tumultuous but wholesale hanging day.

But the mob were content with having thrashed him once, and seem to have thought he had bought a right to his opinions. At all events they conceded the point, and the resolute devil was allowed to darken his house, and rebuke the weakness of the people in coming to terms with Bony.

#### THE PITCHER GOES ONCE TOO OFTEN TO THE WELL.

Camelford had a male friend, a Mr. Best, and, unfortunately, a female friend, who had once lived with this very Best. This Mrs. Simmons told Camelford that Best had spoken disparagingly of him. Camelford believed her, and took fire. He met Best at a coffee-house, and walked up to

him and said, in a loud, aggressive way, before several persons, 'I find, sir, you have spoken of me in the most unwarrantable terms.'

Mr. Best replied, with great moderation, that he was quite unconscious of having deserved such a charge.

'No, sir, says Camelford—'you know very well what you said of me to Mrs. Simmons. You are a scoundrel, a liar, and a ruffian!'

In those days such words as these could only be wiped out with blood, and seconds were at once appointed.

Both gentlemen remained at the coffee-house some time, and during that time Mr. Best made a creditable effort; he sent Lord Camelford a solemn assurance he had been deceived, and said that under those circumstances he would be satisfied if his lordship would withdraw the expressions he had uttered in error. But Camelford absolutely refused, and then Best left the house in considerable agitation, and sent his lordship a note. The people of the house justly suspected this was a challenge, and gave information to the police; but they were dilatory, and took no steps till it was too late.

Next morning early the combatants met at a coffee-house in Oxford Street, and Best made an unusual and, indeed, a touching attempt to com-



pose the difference. 'Camelford,' he said, 'we have been friends, and I know the unsuspecting generosity of your nature. Upon my honour you have been imposed upon by a strumpet. Do not insist on expressions under which one of us must fall.'

Camelford, as it afterward appeared, was by no means unmoved by this appeal. But he answered, doggedly, 'Best, this is child's play; the thing must go on.' The truth is, Best had the reputation of being a fatal shot, and this steeled Camelford's pride and courage against all overtures.

The duel was in a meadow behind Holland House. The seconds placed the men at thirty paces, and this seems to imply they were disposed to avoid a fatal termination if possible.

Camelford fired first, and missed. Best hesitated, and some think he even then asked Camelford to retract. This, however, is not certain. He fired, and Lord Camelford fell at his full length, like a man who was never to stand again.

They all ran to him; and it is said he gave Best his hand, and said, 'Best, I am a dead man. You have killed me; but I freely forgive you.'

This may very well be true; for it certainly accords with what he had already placed on paper

the day before, and also with words he undoubtedly uttered in the presence of several witnesses soon after.

Mr. Best and his second made off to provide for their safety. One of Lord Holland's gardeners called out to some men to stop them ; but the wounded man rebuked him, and said he would not have them stopped : he was the aggressor. He forgave the gentleman who had shot him, and hoped God would forgive him too.

He was carried home, his clothes were cut off him, and the surgeons at once pronounced the wound mortal. The bullet was buried in the body, and the lower limbs quite paralysed by its action. It was discovered, after his death, embedded in the spinal marrow, having traversed the lungs. He suffered great agonies that day, but obtained some sleep in the night. He spoke often, and with great contrition, of his past life, and relied on the mercy of his Redeemer.

Before the duel he had done a just and worthy act. He had provided for the safety of Mr. Best by adding to his will a positive statement that he was the aggressor in every sense : 'Should I, therefore, lose my life in a contest of my own seeking, I solemnly forbid any of my friends or relations to proceed against my antagonist.' He added that if the law should, nevertheless, be put

in force, he hoped this part of his will would be laid before the King.

I have also private information, on which I think I can rely, that, when he found he was to die, he actually wrote to the King with his own hand, entreating him not to let Best be brought into trouble.

And if we consider that, as death draws near, the best of men generally fall into a mere brutish apathy—whatever you may read to the contrary in tracts—methinks good men and women may well yield a tear to this poor, foolish, sinful, but heroic creature, who, in agonies of pain and the jaws of death, could yet be so earnest in his anxiety that no injustice should be done to the man who had laid him low. This stamps Camelford *a man*. The best woman who ever breathed was hardly capable of it. She would forgive her enemy, but she could not trouble herself and worry herself, and provide, moribunda, against injustice being done to that enemy ; *c'était mâle*.

I come now to those particulars which have caused me to revive the memory of Thomas Pitt, Lord Camelford, and I divide them into public and private information.

## THE PUBLIC INFORMATION.

The day before his death Lord Camelford wrote a codicil to his will, which, like his whole character, merits study.

He requested his relations not to wear mourning for him, and he gave particular instructions as to the disposal of his remains in their last resting-place. In this remarkable document he said that most persons are strongly attached to their native place, and would have their remains conveyed home, even from a great distance. 'His desire, however, was the reverse. He wished his body to be conveyed to a country far distant, to a spot not near the haunts of men, but where the surrounding scenery might smile upon his remains.'

He then went into details. The place was by the lake of St. Pierre, in the Canton Berne, Switzerland. The particular spot had three trees standing on it. He desired the centre tree to be taken up and his body deposited in the cavity, and no stone nor monument to mark the place. He gave a reason for the selection, in spite of a standing caution not to give reasons. 'At the foot of that tree,' said he, 'I formerly passed many hours in solitude, contemplating the mutability of human affairs.' He left the proprietors of the trees and ground 1,000*l.* by way of compensation.

## COMMENT ON THE PUBLIC INFORMATION.

Considering his penitent frame of mind, his request to his relations not to go into mourning for him may be assigned to humility, and the sense that he was no great loss to them.

But as to the details of his interment, I feel sure he mistook his own mind, and was, in reality, imitating the very persons he thought he differed from. I read him thus by the light of observation. Here was a man whose life had been a storm. At its close he looked back over the dark waves, and saw the placid waters his youthful bark had floated in before he dashed into the surf. Eccentric in form, it was not eccentric at bottom, this wish to lay his shattered body beneath the tree where he had sat so often an innocent child, little dreaming then that he should ever kill poor Peterson with a pistol, and be killed with a pistol himself in exact retribution. That at eleven years of age he had meditated under that tree on the mutability of human affairs is nonsense. Here is a natural anachronism and confusion of ideas. He was meditating on that subject as he lay a dying; but such were never yet the meditations of a child. The matter is far more simple than all this. He who lay dying by a bloody death remembered the green meadows, the blue lake,

the peaceful hours, the innocent thoughts, and the sweet spot of nature that now seemed to him a temple. His wish to lie in that pure and peaceful home of his childhood was a natural instinct, and a very common one. Critics have all observed it, and many a poet sung it, from Virgil to Scott.

*Occidit, et moriens dulces reminiscitur Argos.*

#### THE PRIVATE INFORMATION.

In the year 1858 I did business with a firm of London solicitors, the senior partner of which had in his youth been in a house that acted for Lord Camelford.

It was this gentleman who told me Camelford really wrote a letter to the King in favour of Best. He told me, further, that preparations were actually made to carry out Camelford's wishes as to the disposal of his remains. He was embalmed and packed up for transportation. But at that very nick of time war was proclaimed again, and the body, which was then deposited, *pro tempore*, in St. Anne's Church, Soho, remained there, awaiting better times.

The war lasted a long while, and, naturally enough, Camelford's body was forgotten.

After Europe was settled, it struck the solicitor, who was my friend's informant, that Camelford

had never been shipped for Switzerland. He had the curiosity to go to St. Anne's Church and inquire. He found the sexton in the church, as it happened, and asked him what had become of Lord Camelford.

'Oh,' said the sexton, in a very cavalier way, 'here he is;' and showed him a thing which he afterward described to my friend M'Leod as an enormously long fish-basket, fit to pack a shark in.

And this, M'Leod assured me, was seven or eight years after Camelford's death.

Unfortunately, M'Leod could not tell me whether his informant paid a second visit to the church, or what took place between 1815 and 1858.

The deceased Peer may be now lying peacefully in that sweet spot he selected and paid for. But I own to some misgivings on that head. In things of routine, delay matters little; indeed, it is part of the system; but when an out-of-the-way thing is to be done, oh, then delay is dangerous: the zeal cools; the expense and trouble look bigger; the obligation to incur them seems fainter. The inertia of Mediocrity flops like lead into the scale, and turns it. Time is really *edax rerum*, and fruitful in destructive accidents rectors are apt to be a little lawiess; church-

wardens deal with dustmen; and dead Peers are dust. Even sextons are capable of making away with what nobody seems to value, or it would not lie years forgotten in a corner.

These thoughts prey upon my mind: and as his life and character were very remarkable, and his death very, very noble, and his instructions explicit, and the duty of performing them sacred, I have taken the best way I know to rouse inquiry, and learn, if possible,

#### WHAT HAS BECOME OF LORD CAMELFORD'S BODY.

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AUTHORITIES.—*Annual Register*, February 25, 1798; *Times*, January 14 and 17, 1799; *True Briton*, January 17, 19, 1799; 'Humphries v. Camelford,' *London Chronicle*, *Times*, *True Briton*, *Porcupine*, May 16, 17, 18, 1799; *Porcupine*, October 8 and 12, 1801; *Times*, October 9, 12, 17, 24, 1801; *Morning Post*, March, 8, 10, 13, 14, 26, 28, 1804; *Annual Register*, 1804; *Eccentric Mirror*, 1807.

Rev. William Cockburn, 'An Authentic Account of Lord Camelford's Death, with an Extract from his Will,' &c., 1804. Letter from William Cockburn to Philip Neve, Esq., *Morning Post*, March 26, 1804.

M'Leod, deceased.





